LUTHERAN IN TWO WORLDS: REMAKING MISSION FROM MADAGASCAR TO THE MIDWEST UNITED STATES

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Anthropology)
in The University of Michigan
2008

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DEDICATION

In memory of my father, who felt torn between two worlds,
and for my mother, who has long lived between worlds with grace

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation draws upon twenty-two continuous months of ethnographic fieldwork (December 2004-October 2006) in Minneapolis/St. Paul and the Upper Midwest United States; travel to southern Madagascar in November-December 2005; preliminary interviews in Minneapolis/St. Paul in June-July 2003; and a short follow-up visit in May 2008. The research could not have been conducted without the generous support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Center for the Ethnography of Everyday Life at the University of Michigan. I also gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Department of Anthropology and the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies.

I greatly appreciate the constructive and insightful guidance of my dissertation committee during my research and writing. Whatever merit exists in this work is due primarily to their teaching. Gillian Feeley-Harnik carefully read numerous chapter drafts and provided critical comments with great insight and kindness. Her mentorship has indelibly shaped my graduate education at all stages and to say that she has been inspiring would be an understatement. Tom Fricke has given me crucial encouragement for this project in every stage and led me to important sources on religious history in the Midwest United States. His insightful words of advice and support always seemed to come at just the right time. Erik Mueggler's comments on several chapters emboldened me to be more precise about my contribution to the anthropology of religion, and his support has been crucial throughout my graduate education. Paul Johnson's suggestions

directed me to broader issues concerning religion and space, and his interest in the thesis has been extremely welcome.

I owe special thanks to Emanuela Grama, Josh Reno, Xochitl Ruiz, and Cecilia Tomori for stimulating conversation and suggestions on earlier drafts of the material, as well as countless gestures of support and friendship along the way. I could write volumes about the latter, but I trust each person knows how grateful I continue to be for his or her friendship. Elana Buch, Sallie Han, Karen Hebert, and Erin Prus provided helpful advice to me as I began to muddle through the process of writing. Sallie in particular offered me her friendship and advice throughout my years of graduate school. The members of my dissertation writing group – Sonia Das, Henrike Florusbosch, Erika Hoffmann, Karen Smid, and Vanessa Will – supplied guidance and support at an early stage in the writing process. Laurie Marx, Judy Baughn, and Jana Bruce at the University of Michigan graciously answered my questions on countless occasions, and their knowledge and humor helped me through my graduate education. Molly Mullin of Albion College first introduced me to the world of anthropology and continues to be a kind mentor.

I am grateful to the Semiotics Work Group at the University of Michigan and Richard Parmentier of Brandeis University for encouraging comments on a conference paper that became Chapter 6. Moreover, the participants of two conferences discussed the research that became part of Chapter 3 in a supportive and discerning manner: the Imagining Kin Conference at the University of Michigan in March 2005 and the panel, "The Stuff We Are Made Of: New Studies in Substance, Material, and Kinship," at the 2005 American Anthropological Association Meetings. I thank my discussants Gillian Feeley-Harnik (Imagining Kin) as well as Joëlle Bahloul of Indiana University and Janet

Carsten of the University of Edinburgh (AAA Meetings). Finally, I presented the material that became Chapters 5 and 6 at the 2006 Meeting of the Yale-Edinburgh Mission Studies Group. I am grateful to my discussant Elizabeth Koepping of the University of Edinburgh for her interest in the research.

The greatest debt I owe is to the missionaries and Lutherans in Minneapolis/St. Paul who took me into their homes and lives, sharing with me and teaching me many things. I do not name them here because of my commitment to their privacy, but I hope they recognize that I will always remember their many acts of kindness. I give special thanks to the family with whom I traveled to Madagascar in November-December 2005. The man whom I call Lynn, the founder and director of the agency Malagasy Partnership in suburban Minneapolis, became a good friend and made it possible for me to travel to the April 2006 meeting of Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare in Tennessee. In Minneapolis/St. Paul, I received instrumental support from the Luther Theological Seminary, which granted me permission to use its library. The staff of the ELCA Region 3/Luther Theological Seminary Archives in St. Paul, particularly the archivist Paul Daniels, gave me invaluable guidance as I made my way through the extensive collection of Madagascar mission materials. Paul and his staff welcomed me to the archives and treated me as a friend, which made my research there enjoyable and productive. I am grateful for the help of Joel Thoreson during my May 2006 visit to the ELCA Churchwide Archives in Chicago.

I thank David Cuddohy for the great gift of his companionship, humor, love, and support with everything. He kept me up when writing sometimes got me down. It is impossible to mention all the friends who gave encouragement to me as I embarked on

the long road of conducting research and writing the dissertation. My brother Bengt asked me insightful questions about what I was writing and made me strive to be more reflective, subtle, and critical at the same time. My mother Berit continues to teach me the art of her resilience, empathy, and peaceful way of being with people. I wished many times throughout this project that I could ask my father questions about my research. He passed away just before I began graduate school, but he lives in this text in more influential ways than I could possibly explain.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALC	American Lutheran Church, formed in 1960
ALCG	American Lutheran Church (German)
ALCW	American Lutheran Church Women
CFBCI	Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (USAID)
ELC	Evangelical Lutheran Church (Norwegian)
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, formed in 1988
FJKM	*Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasasikara* (Presbyterian Church of Jesus Christ of Madagascar)
FLM	*Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy* (Malagasy Lutheran Church)
IHM	International Health Mission
LFC	Lutheran Free Church (Norwegian)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NLCA	Norwegian Lutheran Church of America
NMS	Norwegian Missionary Society (*Det Norske Misjonsselskap)*
SALFA	*Sampan'asa Loterana Momba Ny Fahasalamana* (Malagasy Lutheran health care department)
SEFAM	*Sekoly Fanomanana Mpitsabo* (Malagasy Lutheran school of nursing)
TECH	Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WMF	Women's Missionary Federations (LFC and ELC)

GLOSSARY

bygd	Norwegian, rural community or country district
Fifohazana	Malagasy, awakening, revival
krumkaka	Norwegian, cake
lamba	Malagasy, cloth
lefse	Norwegian, thin potato pancake
mpiandry	Malagasy, shepherd
ombiasa	Malagasy, ritual practitioner
sandbakkelse	Norwegian, sugar cookie
toby	Malagasy, lit., camp
Tranovato	Malagasy, lit. stone house; the missionary children's home in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro
vazaha	Malagasy, foreigner/stranger/white person

INTRODUCTION

One September morning, six volunteer workers, including myself, gathered for the scheduled coffee break at the International Health Mission building in northwest Minneapolis. We had been sorting and packing medical supplies for overseas shipment, as we did each Tuesday. Lois, a retired American Lutheran missionary to Madagascar from 1952 to 1982, appeared frustrated as she sipped coffee from a heavy mug, her brow wrinkled in concentration. Many of my conversations with Lois and her daughter Carolyn throughout the morning focused on the recent passing of Margaret, a single woman missionary who worked in southeast Madagascar from 1952 to 1970. Lois described Margaret as an "aunt" to her children, "closer" than many other relatives, and Carolyn affectionately referred to Margaret in her stories as "Auntie Margaret." Returning to the subject in the coffee break, Lois mentioned that Margaret's sister flew to Minneapolis/St. Paul for Margaret's funeral and, after arriving in town the day before, she sorted with Lois' help through some of her sister's things at the small apartment where she had lived. Margaret's sister, however, had not taken Margaret's photo albums with her, compiled over the course of Margaret's 18 years in Madagascar. Lois paused after relaying this piece of news. "But this is history!" she lamented in conclusion, as Carolyn, Harriet, Maude, Walter, and I listened to the story. Carolyn nodded her head in agreement.

Lois implied that Margaret's siblings, her sister and "estranged" brother, appeared not to see the photographs' value, nor the social relations through which they came to

life. She wanted Margaret's siblings to see how Margaret contributed to and lived "history"; Lois framed the photographs' value in these terms in order to construct their importance for people unfamiliar with the work of missionaries in Madagascar. Her statement appeared as much about wanting Margaret's siblings to see Margaret as she did – and to acknowledge the importance of her work with an appeal to its "historical" value – as it did about wanting to salvage the photo albums that Margaret herself saved all these years. These photo albums bear traces of Margaret's person: her care in taking the photographs, affixing them to the album pages, ordering and writing captions for them, and representing visually the relationships, places, and experiences that were significant to her. What Lois did not address, but what was suggested in her claim to the photographs' historical value, was that she herself was involved in making and being "history," not only through Margaret's photographs but also as a person who worked as an American Lutheran missionary in Madagascar during the same time period.

Lois's remark left me with several questions: When did the photographs become "history"? Had they become "history" because they were now left as traces of Margaret's life and work? She would no longer be around to tell her stories, so the photographs were suddenly left to speak for her. In telling me why those close to Margaret were thankful for the swiftness of her passing, Lois mentioned that Margaret had gradually lost the ability to talk; she suffered from Alzheimer's disease and she became unable to speak, silent during her final weeks. This seemed particularly sad for Lois, who remembered Margaret "always full of life," laughing, and telling funny stories to Lois, other missionaries, and the children with whom she worked at the Manafiafy Girls' School. Lois and Carolyn visited Margaret several weeks before her death, bringing the Malagasy

hymnbook and singing several hymns for her. They could see the joy on Margaret's face, Lois said, when she heard the hymns again.

This dissertation is an historical ethnography of moral personhood and practices of moral and political collectivity among former American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar, their American supporters, and their social relations in Madagascar. On the one hand, this dissertation begins at an end: the dissolution of the American Lutheran foreign mission movement and, specifically, the long American Lutheran missionary presence in Madagascar, which began in 1888. Yet on the other hand, I explore how former missionaries sustain and imagine the worldly role of American Lutherans at a time when they represent an institutional "past" in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The dissertation asks the following primary questions: How do missionaries account for and use history in their everyday practices and how do these practices inform their unfolding personhood and social relations? What role do these visions of the past and other representational practices have in cultivating new forms of American Lutheran worldly engagement?

I examine these questions through the ethnographic research I conducted with former American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar and their families who now reside in Minneapolis/St. Paul and the surrounding Upper Midwest U.S.[1] American Lutheran missionaries filled a range of positions in the Malagasy Lutheran Church, from ordained pastors to nurses and hospital administrators; spent varying lengths of time in Madagascar, with some living on the island up to 40 years; and most left Madagascar in

[1] One retired missionary pastor, who sends newsletters, obituaries, and death notices to the Madagascar missionaries, told me that in 2005-2006 he had 150 recipients on his mailing list, which included missionaries and their family members in Minnesota and other locations in the United States. Mailing list recipients are only a small fraction of the total people connected through kin, written accounts, personal involvement, or churches to American Lutheran mission work in Madagascar.

the 1970s and 1980s. Since returning to the United States, they have settled in middle-class suburban neighborhoods that stretch east and west of the Mississippi River bisecting the Twin Cities, often selecting a house only blocks from their children and grandchildren. The missionaries I knew grew up either in Lutheran families in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, or South Dakota in the 1920s and 1930s, or in southern Madagascar where they lived as the children of American Lutheran missionaries.[2] Most missionaries in my research, though not all, claim Norwegian descent, with their ancestors emigrating from Norway to the Midwest United States in the late nineteenth century.[3]

Seventy percent of the nine million Lutherans in the United States today live in the Midwest, where Lutheran churches were established primarily by German, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian immigrants beginning in the 1860s (Granquist 2007:754).[4] In particular, Norwegian ethnic nationalism has played a substantial role in the American Lutheran mission to Madagascar. The Norwegian Missionary Society (*Den Norske Misjonsselskap*) sent its first two missionaries to Madagascar in 1866. From the 1860s through 1925, Norwegian Lutherans with direct ties to Lutheran mission work in Madagascar were among the more than 800,000 Norwegians who immigrated to the United States. Since that time, American Lutherans have sent about 385 missionaries from Minnesota and the Upper Midwest to southern Madagascar.[5] Today, the ELCA

[2] Only one missionary I knew converted to Lutheranism as a young adult and did so as she married a Lutheran man.

[3] In 1990, 757,212 Minnesotans claimed Norwegian descent, more than 17 percent of the state population at the time (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:1).

[4] Ninety-five percent of American Lutherans belong to two denominations: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). The ELCA has 5.1 million members, while the LCMS has 2.6 million (Granquist 2007:754).

[5] Although Lutheran churches formed at an earlier time (as early as 1619) in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Georgia, comprised of predominantly Swedish, German, Finnish, and Danish immigrants to the United States, I focus here on Lutheran immigration to the Upper Midwest, which occurred during a later period (predominantly between 1825 and 1900) and involved by the beginning of the twentieth century a

financially supports only two American Lutheran missionaries in Madagascar, as compared with 61 in 1960.[6]

Mission work in Madagascar became a sustaining practice of Norwegian ethnicity among American Lutherans. I suggest, however, that this was not only due to the mission's Norwegian origin but also because of specific practices in Madagascar and in Minnesota that constructed and maintained Norwegianness as a salient dimension of social difference. These practices were especially apparent to me as I moved to Minnesota and began my field research. For example, when I admitted to one former missionary that I had never before eaten *lefse* (a Norwegian flatbread), he expressed great surprise, since *lefse* had been a common household staple and still remains a regionally sold, specially demanded item in nationally-owned supermarkets in Minnesota and the surrounding region. Describing Minnesota as a Norwegian "cultural center," Gjerde and Qualey (2002: 1-2) write, "One might go even further to say that even those Minnesotans who do not claim a Norwegian heritage live in a state indelibly identified with Norway." While many popular accounts emphasize rapid ethnic assimilation among white immigrants following the turn of the twentieth century, more recent studies suggest the ways that Norwegian Americans maintained "their identities as *both* Norwegian and American" (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:57; italics in original).

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majority of Norwegian settlers. Following a long period of schism and reunification, the earlier group of Lutheran immigrants formed the Lutheran Church in America in 1962, based in New York, and the later, larger one the American Lutheran Church in 1960, based in Minneapolis (until 1987). The two church bodies merged with a third, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, in 1988, forming the current Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which has its headquarters in Chicago.

[6] For the purposes of comparison to contemporary paid employees, this figure counts only the officially "called" and paid missionaries of the ELCA in 1960, which typically included single female missionaries and male missionaries. The wives and families of married male missionaries were often not listed as official employees or were considered part of a married missionary "unit." I have included male missionaries' wives in the calculation of total ELCA missionaries to Madagascar, drawn from the ELCA's own records and reproduced on the Web at http://www.elca.org/archives/missionaries/madagascarmiss.html.

My point in describing Minnesota as a "Norwegian cultural center" is not to imply that Norwegian ethnicity is presumed nor given among the American Lutheran missionaries I knew. Rather, I wish to keep in view the changing ethnic and racial landscape through which retired American Lutheran missionaries position and understand themselves in Minneapolis/St. Paul. The situation is more complex and flexible in practice, as I show in subsequent chapters: former American Lutheran missionaries and their children selectively construct their ethnic and racial identity through refracting sets of ethnic-national relations, which they use to define themselves differently by situation and in relation to specific narrative memories: American to Norwegian, Norwegian-American to Norwegian, American to Malagasy, American to French, Scandinavian to non-Scandinavian, American to non-American. One of my goals in the dissertation is to show that American Lutherans in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest have actively constructed their vision of region and person through engagements and places elsewhere, most especially in Madagascar. My dissertation contributes this regional and historical perspective to the wider conversations in anthropology on Christianity in the United States (Harding 2000; Peacock and Tyson 1989).

Moral Personhood, Exchange, and Materiality

The process of envisioning the missionaries' as *moral* persons, which I described briefly earlier, simultaneously reconceptualizes the role of the American Lutheran church in the world, particularly in relation to colonial and postcolonial critiques of American Protestant missionary evangelism. In his foundational writing on personhood, Marcel Mauss (1938[1979]: 85) argues that the contemporary notion of the human person stems from the Christian view that the moral person is a "metaphysical entity." Mauss traces

this Christian notion to Paul's letter to the Galatians (3:28), where Paul identifies the unity of Christians in the three "persons" of Christ, Spirit, and God and in the division of the person of Christ into two natures, human and divine. When Mauss writes that the predominant contemporary notion of personhood finds its basis in Christian moral personhood, he points out that the dualistic and multisided figure of Christ laid the foundation for the wider conceptualization of the oneness of the person, but always *in relation* to the divine person and to the human person (86). Mauss goes on to argue that sectarian movements, such as Pietism, established the notion that the person was the self and the self, in turn, formed a direct passage to the individual consciousness.

I use Mauss' observation that the Christian moral person is a "metaphysical entity," always related to the conceptualization of the divine and the manifestation of the divine in the world (as in the figure of Christ and the church), as a key analytical backbone for this dissertation. I do not intend to suggest that there is a single and unchanging understanding of "the Christian moral person." Rather, Mauss' work lays the foundation for a relational and inherently historical understanding of moral personhood in Christianity. We might infer from his writing that Christian persons come into being in relation to their ever-changing imagining of the church in the world, as well as the figure of Christ. The ALC/ELCA has undergone profound changes in the last thirty years in how it envisions the political and social obligations of the church in relation to those of other nations. I view these changes through the unfolding personhood and social relations of former American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar.

American Lutheran missionaries respond to the institutional and political changes in their lifetime through two interrelated social practices. They enact spiritual and

political obligations and imaginaries through their work with medical supplies in two Lutheran medical non-profit organizations in Minneapolis, which I call International Health Mission (est. 1987) and Malagasy Partnership (est. 1980). These agencies, begun by former Madagascar missionaries and their children, further the collective labor that missionaries pursued overseas by sending medical supplies, financial donations, and equipment to the Malagasy Lutheran health care system (*Sampan'asa Loterana Momba Ny Fahasalamana*, SALFA), an arm of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Furthermore, missionaries produce certain visions of the past through the circulation of photographs, silver bracelets, and memoir books. The memoir books in particular aid former missionaries and their kin in transforming the missionaries' personal stories into signs of "history," as Lois implied earlier. Through the production and circulation of these books, missionaries become living spiritual "ancestors" and embodiments of institutional, political, and religious change.

I focus upon material exchanges within the dissertation because they shape the missionaries' personhood through social relations with their kin, imagined and unseen interlocutors, former coworkers in Madagascar, and the divine. The missionaries that I knew were primarily elderly, and their kin relations marked the process of aging through repeated requests that they record and "write down" their life stories. In her ethnography of aging and personhood among middle and higher-caste Hindus in Mangaldihi, India, Sarah Lamb (2000:27-41) has shown compellingly that personhood is not fixed but made and unmade in social relations through sharing food, sleeping together, exchanging talk, and absorbing even the bodily substance of saliva (*lālā*) through food leavings. Although Lamb (2000:31) suggests that European and American understandings of the person have

often been considered more “closed” and “contained” than Bengali notions, ethnographic studies show North American and European personhoods to be not as distinctly different nor “bounded” as is sometimes argued in anthropology.

Drawing upon ethnographic research in Montreal, Marcoux (2001) argues that elderly residents engage in “breaking the house” (*casser maison*) and construct their person and their relations through purposeful exchanges of family heirlooms, such as jewelry, linens, and silverware sets. Moreover, in a study of organ donation in Los Angeles and New York, Sharp (2001:127) describes how donor kin relations battle medical discourses that “dehumanize” the deceased’s body in the process of “organ procurement.” These kin stage “alternative memorials,” involving virtual cemeteries and donor quilts, that counter the anonymity of organ donors in the medical context and reclaim the personhood of the organ donor (129). My goal in highlighting these findings is not to suggest that my research contributes to the definition of a distinct North American notion of personhood, but rather to establish the idea that the processual and relational formation of personhood is well-documented in North American ethnography (see e.g., Dominguez, Caruth, and Esch 1986; Weston 2001; Auslander 2002).

As Sharp (2001) shows regarding the biomedical construction of the organ donor’s body, institutions and authoritative, or expert, ethical, legal, and medical discourses profoundly influence how people form and understand social relationships**.** This is no less true in Christian practice, where theologians and other religious authorities expound influential and prescriptive exegeses of the Bible and doctrine. These discourses constitute moral practices in that they instruct the *proper* way human persons should relate to material things, words, bodies, and to each other (see also Parmentier 2006:7).

Moreover, they often instill the separateness of the person from the material and sensuous environment. As Webb Keane (2007:225) shows, early twentieth-century Dutch Calvinist missionaries maintained that *marapu* ritualists in Sumba, Indonesia attributed "false values" to objects and did not appropriately recognize their human agency in relation to material things. The missionaries, Keane (2007:7) argues, brought with them their "tacit assumptions," or semiotic ideology, concerning the "autonomy of human agents." This semiotic ideology constitutes one crucial backbone of a wider Protestant moral narrative of modernity that associates human autonomy and self-emancipation with being modern (Keane 2007).

Importantly, Keane (2003, 2007) points out that, while semiotic ideologies may hold important moral weight in Christian practice and beyond, they exist as perpetually unfulfilled propositions, since practitioners find it impossible to escape the entanglements of material and sensual life. Scholarship on material culture in Protestantism often has been limited by the fundamentally ambivalent view of materiality that suffuses Protestant theology and practice: one must engage the material world in order to transcend it, yet the material as conceptualized in many Protestant theologies is ultimately profane. As McDannell (1995) points out, the revived study of "material Christianity" in the United States is not only a corrective to earlier scholarship that tended to bracket the experiences of daily life from the more legitimately "religious" activities of the liturgy and sacraments. The scholarly exclusion of practices that occur outside church venues reinforces one predominant moral view of what religion is and should be (Orsi 1998, Morgan and Promey 2001). The entanglements, uses, and debates over material form in Protestant practice concern fundamental moral dilemmas and paradoxes concerning

divine presence and absence, the nature of blessing, prayer, and the limits of the body (Engelke 2007: 11-16).

In the dissertation, I follow scholarship that understands these material practices as historical in the semiotic sense (Munn 1986; Keane 2003, 2005, 2007; Miller 2005; Parmentier 1994, Chapter 2, 1997). These approaches build upon the writings of American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, who considered the sign to be a material-semiotic form in direct, multifaceted interrelationship with the material world. Importantly, Peirce viewed the interpretive process of social intercourse as essentially historical (organized through social convention), ongoing, and infinitely ever-changing (Peirce c.1902 [1940]; Parmentier 2006). Peirce's philosophy opens the way for an investigation of how social authority is not epiphenomenal to the processes of representation and interpretation that comprise social life in its many forms, but integrally constitutive of them. A Peircean semiotic approach to the study of material culture permits me to examine how pervasive and authoritative religious discourses mediate a variety of specific practices among missionaries, from bracelet-wearing to the production of bandages. At the same time, my research shows how actively evolving relationships among the perceived material qualities of these things, and the social contexts they create, present former missionaries and their families with unfolding interpretive dilemmas (cf. Parmentier 1997: 49). In order to set the stage for the rest of the dissertation, I now turn to a brief discussion of the two crucial social transformations in the lives of the missionaries I knew: changing post-World War II mission theologies in American Lutheranism and the growth of Malagasy nationalism after the end of French occupation (1960).

Toward a Theology of "Accompanying": Post-World War II American Lutheranism

The American Lutheran Church, which formed in Minneapolis through the merger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Norwegian), the American Lutheran Church (German) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish) in 1960, demonstrated an overarching commitment to ecumenism, or liberal Protestantism, and to social policy during the second half of the twentieth century. This involved both making social statements on Civil Rights, women's rights, and national foreign policy and participating in interfaith dialogues beginning in 1962 with Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, Methodists, Baptists, and Conservative Evangelicals (Lagerquist 1999:139-146; Noll 2003:14; Erling 2003:46). Inside the church, however, these policies were far from being unanimously endorsed (Nelson 1980:527). While ecumenicals, or liberal Lutherans, alleged that the problems of the world should set the church's agenda, evangelicals argued that the church's concern with American social policy unduly overshadowed what should be its ultimate purpose of proclaiming the Gospel (Nelson 1980:539).[7]

The shifting ideology of appropriate worldly involvement – from foreign missionary presence to nationally-led evangelism – was a source of debate and schism among American Lutherans in the Upper Midwest. Some believed the ALC/ELCA

[7] This perspective was present, although not unanimous, among the missionaries I know. One woman asserted that the "peace and justice people," a powerful minority in the ELCA as she identified it, now determined the social and theological foundation of the Division for Global Mission within the church. What concerned her most about this segment of American Lutheranism was that it did not focus upon "peace and justice" primarily from the perspective of Lutheran theology, but rather understood peace and justice from the position of secular social movements in the United States. She appeared more concerned that the focus on peace and justice within the ELCA reflected an American-derived notion of these concepts and resulted in an Ameri-centric, secularized Christianity, than that these issues projected a politically liberal social theology (Interview, 23 August 2006).

abandoned the biblical mandate to preach the Gospel message to the "ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) and left the church for the charismatic Lutheran Renewal movement or the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (an independent outgrowth of the Lutheran Free Church when it merged with the American Lutheran Church in 1963). Since 1988, ELCA Lutherans have debated a series of social issues that perpetually threaten to break apart the church, as well as other mainline denominations like the Episcopal Church in the United States (Banerjee 2007b). These issues include the ordination of women, which the ALC/ELCA voted to allow beginning in 1970; biblical criticism; and, more recently, the sanctification of same-sex unions and the ordination of openly gay and lesbian seminary graduates. People often weighed all of these issues, including the question of overseas mission work, in deciding whether or not to leave the ELCA.

The ALC/ELCA gradually cut funding for foreign missions between 1970 and 1990 while enlarging its financial contributions to interfaith development, humanitarian aid, and hunger relief projects that fell under the singular term "global mission." The term "global mission" worked to dissociate mission work from American imperialism and highlighted the underlying idea that every Lutheran church pursued mission work, rather than only North American and Western European churches. Moreover, American Lutherans knew that former mission churches incorporated a vast number of national pastors, catechists, and evangelists who operated their church institutions and had done so for years. Within the Malagasy Lutheran Church, Malagasy personnel had outnumbered American foreign missionaries for at least 50 years.[8] Despite substantial representation in

[8] As early as 1936, the mission church of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in the southeast included 267 "Malagasy workers," which included 22 pastors; 167 evangelists or catechists, laymen who had studied for two years at the Bible School in Ambovombe; 5 Bible women, laywomen who had completed the two years of Bible study; 63 teachers; and ten unspecified church workers (Yearbook

positions of religious authority, American missionaries and Malagasy Lutherans did not necessarily have equal status within the church institutions at the time. The ELCA identified institutionalized "white privilege" as one primary problem in past relationships and practices of mission work in the church (Global Mission in the 21st Century 1999:15,17).

The decrease in financial support for ELCA overseas missionaries is, of course, only part of the story and cannot be understood apart from changing ideologies of mission work and sectarian conflict. After World War II, new evangelicals, led by the prominent evangelists Charles Fuller and Carl Henry, increasingly opposed the mainline Protestant denominations in the United States, arguing that the institutional church played little role in one's faith (Bornstein 2005:20; cf. Harding 2000). Hutchinson (1987:193) reports that nearly 60 percent of the decline in mainline Protestant foreign missionaries during the period between 1960 and 1980 may be attributed to the leave-taking of conservative evangelicals from the denominational churches rather than to their decrease in funding for foreign missionaries. The greatest growth occurred during this time period in "unaffiliated" overseas mission organizations, such as the Wycliffe Bible Translators, which represented new or expanded non- and interdenominational Protestant groups. The number of missionaries involved with these groups grew from 7,000 in 1960 to 17,000 in

1937:87). At the time, 52 American missionaries, including ordained men, single women, and married women, worked in the Lutheran church of the southeast (87). By 1943, during World War II, the numbers had decreased slightly, but remained consistent: 34 male missionaries and single female missionaries in southeast Madagascar; 246 Malagasy "native workers," which included pastors, catechists, and evangelists; and 9,283 total members of the Lutheran mission church. Source: Daily Prayer for Foreign Missions. Booklet. Published in 1943 by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Personal Papers of Cora Martinson. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Archives, Region 3, St. Paul, Minnesota.

1980 (193).[9] Additionally, research shows that the total funding for Christian global missions has not in fact decreased overall but comprised a staggering $20 billion in 2004, as compared with $3 billion in 1970 (Barrett and Johnson 2004: 24).

The dominant ELCA mission theology today is one of "accompaniment." This approach has roots in the genealogy of ecumenical missionary conferences that expressed the need for "partnership instead of paternalism" between mission societies and national churches as early as the Second World Missionary Conference of Jerusalem in 1928 (Lubawa 2007:6). The notion of accompanying stems from Luke 24:13-35, where Jesus secretly accompanies two disciples as they walk together on the road to Emmaus and only becomes known to them through the breaking of bread. Since 1988, the ELCA has paired together the 65 American church synods with overseas "partners" in the Lutheran World Federation, an umbrella organization representing 140 churches in 78 countries. These church relationships, called the Companion Synod program, involve humanitarian service, prayer, regular communication, and exchange visits between the partner churches. According to the ELCA, "global mission" is a matter pursued by God rather than by human beings or human institutions, and something that may be observed or revealed to companions within the personal experience of the accompaniment relationship, as in the account of Luke 24 (Companion Synod Handbook 2006: 3).

Rather than presume the current ELCA mission theology is uniformly adopted among believers, I aim to explore how ordinary laypeople and retired missionaries understand and practice "accompanying" through the Minnesota-based medical NGOs.

[9] Diamond (1992) verifies Hutchinson's data but provides a slightly different perspective on the increase in U.S. foreign missionaries. She writes, "Between 1975 and 1985, [the Protestant missionary] force expanded by 26 percent, growing from 31,186 to 39,309 full-time missionaries in the field. A more dramatic rise was seen in the number of 'short-term' missionaries, which grew from 5,764 to 27,933 during the same ten-year period" (42).

Anthropologists have provided abundant critiques of development and humanitarian policy and supplied detailed discussions that address why the activities of non-governmental organizations are not substantially different from colonial structures of governance and neoliberalism (Gupta 1998; Bornstein 2005; Ferguson 2006; Gifford 1992). Pieterse (1992:21-22) points out that the global involvement of contemporary American evangelicalism arose through shifting U.S. foreign policy during the Reagan years, most notably increasing "privatization." I wish to keep these important critiques in view. The global growth in Christian "service agencies" between 1970, when they numbered 14,100, and 2004, when they totaled 25,000, reinforces the idea that many non-governmental organizations took shape in post-colonial economic circumstances and under increasing American privatization (Barrett and Johnson 2004:24). My goal in the dissertation is not to imply an artificial difference between colonial and post-colonial relations among American Lutherans and Malagasy Lutherans. Instead, I aim to examine how Lutherans conceptualize their work and to explore the implications of how they place themselves *in* time.

In constructing their religious identity in a somewhat different fashion from the ELCA, retired lifelong missionaries attempt to confirm their role *inside* Malagasy Lutheran practice as fellow workers, pastors, and teachers. In part, they draw upon historiographic techniques long used within the mission to organize the time of American Lutheran involvement in southern Madagascar into ethnohistorical periods. These distinctions recognize the distinctiveness of missionaries' work at different historical moments and the particular skills it required in relation to that of their predecessors and successors. Though people identify its end point differently, the "early pioneer period" of

the mission was conventionally regarded as a thing of the past, a time that ended just after the turn of the twentieth century (1888-1906) as it was demarcated in one influential mission history by Burgess (1932:165). Another missionary historian (Ose 1979) later identified three phases of the Lutheran Free Church mission in the southwest: 1) the arrival of American Lutheran missionaries (1889-1919), 2) the development of church centers (1919-1949), and 3) the establishment of a "wider vision" for the church (1950-1979). Although it is possible to divide time into a variety of mission "phases," each with their own internal logic, the emergence of a "wider vision" for the Lutheran churches on the island in the second half of the twentieth century has become, I argue, a particularly important dimension of missionary self-identification in the context of recent debates in American Lutheranism.

Christianity and Nationalism in Madagascar

This period of time (1950-1979) overlapped with the growth in forms of Malagasy nationalism following the end of French colonialism in 1960 and the increasing "*malgachisation"* of the Christian churches on the island (Keller 2005:39). It was not until after the term of Philibert Tsiranana, the first postcolonial president of the Malagasy Republic from 1960 to 1972, that a distinctly anti-colonial movement spread throughout the country to overthrow the relatively unchanged French colonial structures on the island (Sharp 1993:10). During the next two decades, following a socialist revolution that unfolded between 1971 and 1975, the Christian churches gradually formed a strong and more vocal involvement in national politics. Malagasy Christian churches occasionally backed student protest against the governing regime during the political crisis of the early 1970s (Keller 2005:39; Raison-Jourde 1995:296). After 1992, the Christian churches

were the primary opposition to President Didier Ratsiraka, who had attempted to supplant Christian schools throughout the country with state-run institutions (Keller 2005:39). The 2002 defeat of Ratsiraka by Marc Ravalomanana, then vice president of the Presbyterian Church of Jesus Christ of Madagascar (*Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasasikara,* FJKM), has become an identifiable turning point for retired American Lutheran missionaries in the achievement of the "wider vision" by the Malagasy Lutheran Church and for Christianity in Madagascar.

This "wider vision" is a form of Malagasy nationalism, imagined and promoted through the Christian churches on the island. One could argue that foreign missionaries gradually came to see their work – and perhaps *had* to do so – through the goals of the Malagasy Lutheran church authorities under whom they worked. The mission's historical ties to southern Madagascar grew somewhat less important in this process, though I examine in Chapter 3 how these ties remain significant for retired missionaries. The Protestant churches long had a two-sided relationship with the state in Madagascar. Protestantism was originally a state religion under Merina rule, as I address further in Chapter 1. Yet the Protestant churches also provided a platform for protest against the government, particularly during French colonial occupation and then under the military directorate of Didier Ratsiraka (Raison-Jourde 1995:294, 296). In fact, Raison-Jourde (1995:295) stresses that the church became an "ancestral refuge, a centre for expressing national identity," through the oppressive policies of French colonialism, such as the mandatory use of French in schools and local governance.

Ratsiraka's government nationalized and brought under state control the country's import and export markets after 1975, leading to the state's severe indebtedness and

"collapse" by 1980 (Raison-Jourde 1995: 296). It was in this context that the island's churches stepped in to provide basic services for the population that were largely unavailable through the state, including medical care (296). Raison-Jourde (1995) writes,

> It has only been possible for the churches to take on this role thanks to particularly large injections of cash from abroad, especially by the Lutherans and Catholics. The churches have brought in NGOs, something completely unknown in Madagascar before the end of the 1970s (297).

The two Minnesota-based medical non-profit organizations where I conducted my research were established during this time period. The expanding national role of the Malagasy Lutheran Church was made possible by other ecumenical efforts among Malagasy Christians in the early 1980s. Christian leaders organized the Christian Council of Madagascar (FFKM) in 1980, which includes representatives from the four largest Christian denominations in the country. The FFKM played a central role in protesting Ratsiraka's regime and in establishing a transitional government in 1992 (Raison-Jourde 1995:300).

In her recent ethnography of Seventh-Day Adventism in the northeast village of Maroantsetra, Madagascar, Keller (2005:38-40) suggests there has been a lack of research in anthropology on Christian churches in Madagascar, which have played an undisputed role in Malagasy society and politics for more than a century. Keller observes that most of the country's Christians, nearing 50 percent of the total population, reside in the highlands and are Merina and Betsileo, historically the elites of the island (Keller 2005:39). As religious affiliation varies quite widely by region and Madagascar demonstrates marked religious pluralism among Muslims, Christians, Hindus and indigenous ritualists throughout the country, she surmises comparatively that the "deep south remains all but untouched by the Christian influence" (40). While the number of

Christians may be small in proportion to the total regional population, the Malagasy Lutheran Church has been active in the southeast and southwest for decades prior to its official formation in 1950, when it included 1,471 congregations and a membership of 147,095 (Ose 1979:18).[10]

When American Lutherans first sent missionaries to Madagascar in 1888, the London Missionary Society (LMS) had been actively evangelizing the island for more than 50 years and demarcated strict boundaries for where each foreign missionary society could operate. Emissaries of the Norwegian-American Lutheran churches, following in the footsteps of Norwegian Lutherans who arrived in 1866 and began evangelism in the southern plateau and southwest surrounding Toliara, sought approval for their work from Norwegian Missionary Society officials in Stavanger, Norway. American Lutherans endorsed a non-competition agreement with the island's four other active Protestant missionary societies.[11] The late-arriving Americans located their work south of the Tropic of Capricorn, or south of Anantsono/St. Augustine in the west and Manantenina in the east, in the land primarily of Mahafaly, Antandroy and Antanosy.[12] A 1913 Protestant intermissionary conference in Antananarivo reinforced the regional assignments each mission had accepted and built upon the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of June 1910 by adopting an ecumenical "open pulpit and altar" agreement. This meant that Malagasy Protestants could take communion in any participating Protestant church on the island, not only within the church of their baptism and first communion.

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[10] By 1979, the membership of the FLM numbered 495,000 of the country's total 8,500,000 inhabitants (Ose 1979: 18).

[11] The other four Protestant societies included the London Missionary Society, Norwegian Missionary Society (*Det Norske Misjonsselskap*), Foreign Missionary Association (Quaker)**,** and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (Anglican)**.**

[12] According to this arrangement, the LMS retained some small "islands" within the south in Ambalavao-Tsienimparihy and Ambositra where LMS missionaries initially worked prior to Lutheran involvement.

While nearly a century of evangelism by Malagasy Lutherans and American Lutherans built outposts, churches, hospitals and schools in the southwest and southeast, the strong identification between the American Lutheran missions and the southern region began to weaken with the formation of a national Malagasy Lutheran Church in 1950. Although largely a structural move conjoining the Norwegian Lutheran and American Lutheran mission churches, rather than an organization fully in the hands of Malagasy religious authorities, the national church expanded the geographic scale of Lutheran involvement on the island. In 1971, Protestant churches in the country abrogated the 1913 agreement specifying where missionaries of each foreign society could conduct their work. In 1979, the Malagasy Lutheran Church established a national Lutheran health care department with headquarters in Antsirabe and then Antananarivo. The health department linked medical facilities that had previously been part of the Norwegian Mission, American Lutheran missions, and the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Moreover, in the 1980s, church officials successfully made the *fifohazana* (awakening, revival) movement into part of the Lutheran church. This dramatically increased the size of the church and solidified the national scale of its outreach activities (Rakotojoelinandrasana 2002:81).[13]

Studying "Post-Colonial" Missionaries and Christianities

Research on missionary evangelism has been experiencing a renaissance in anthropology during the past twenty years. Orta (2002:710) suggests this resurgence may be due to the "empirical challenges" facing anthropologists and other researchers in parts

[13] In 2001, the membership of the Malagasy Lutheran Church was 1.5 million (The Changing Role of the Missionary nd: 2, http://www.elca.org, accessed January 15, 2007). By comparison, in 1979, the membership of the FLM numbered 495,000 of the country's total 8,500,000 inhabitants (Ose 1979:18).

of Africa, Latin America, and Melanesia: the conspicuous increase in forms of Pentecostalism and charismatic churches in, for example, Papua New Guinea (Robbins 2004; Schieffelin 2000) and Ghana (Meyer 2004, 1999), as well as the role of Christian churches in state development in Indonesia (Aragon 2000). The study of missionaries, the missionary encounter, and missionary evangelism has long captured anthropologists' attention because it is complexly tied to the processes of globalization, colonialism, and modernity (Keane 2007; Van der Veer 2001, 1996; Comaroff 1996, 1986; Hefner 1993). Most of this research, however, has focused upon European and North American missionary "encounters" with people in the non-West during the pre- and early colonial periods, oftentimes using written mission records as primary sources.[14] Less attention overall has been given to how people have made Christianity their own since their early encounters with European and North American missionaries, particularly in the post-colonial period, and to how evangelical Christians from non-Western regions pursue mission work and conceptualize its role in the practice of Christianity.

I would like to highlight several key findings of the large body of literature on colonial missionization, since they prove instructive for the study of evangelical Christianity in the United States and beyond. Missionary evangelism is inherently a comparative endeavor, a meeting, frontier, or borderland of people with divergent social histories, but one that has been freighted with the material and political inequalities of European and American imperialism and colonialism. Writers have often depicted early

[14] Many commentators have touched upon the way that mission sources are biased by the aims and interpretations of missionary writers. In his study of early Malagasy Christianity in highland Madagascar, Larson (1997) notes that London Missionary Society missionaries repeatedly represented their Malagasy interlocutors through the prism of their own interests. He writes of missionary-Malagasy interactions, "These conversations were probably far more dialogic and messy than they appear in missionary correspondence and journals, where Malagasy voices are routinely reported in English and are characteristically undifferentiated and unnamed" (981).

colonial mission interactions using a model of language as a model of social relations: a "conversation" characterized more by misunderstandings than an ease of communication (Stoler and Cooper 1997:7; Comaroff and Comaroff 1986), a process of translation (Meyer 1999:xxv), or a meeting of conflicting representational economies that shape how people perceive words and other semiotic forms (Keane 2007). These studies investigate the missionary encounter as a clash of conflicting expectations, moral discourses, and ontologies. To characterize missionary evangelism as the encounter of two distinct "sides," however, obscures the different and shifting relations of gender, authority, and biography in these interactions, on the part of the missionaries' interlocutors as well as the missionaries themselves (Keane 2007: 285).

Through analyzing the miscommunication and ambivalence of translating Christian principles into "local" contexts, research on colonial missionization has shown that Christianity pervades embodied "everyday practices" (Keane 2007:43), from clothing and dress among Tswana peoples in southern Africa (Comaroff 1996) and meat exchange in Sumba, Indonesia (Keane 2007, 1996) to home-keeping in highland Madagascar (Skeie 1999). In the process of missionary evangelism, many assumed and less critically engaged aspects of the missionaries' own Christian practice become more self-evident. This point is crucial to my research. Missionary evangelism, as well as ethnographic research among Christians in the United States (McDannell 1995; Morgan 1998; Orsi 1985), makes evident that a range of everyday practices often assumed to be epiphenomenal to the Christian religion, strictly defined, are in fact centrally constitutive of Christianity as it is locally understood and appropriated.

Evangelical Lutheranism, for the participants in my study, is an encompassing and debated moral practice. This notion has not received the same kind of direct and sustained scholarly attention in contemporary research on Christians in the United States and Europe that it has gained in colonial mission studies. I take Jean Comaroff's (1996:19) characterization of mission work as "an effort to reform the ordinary" as a key historical, theoretical, and social premise for this dissertation. Recent ethnographic research among American and Polish Catholic missionaries in the Bolivian Andes (Orta 2004) and American Catholic missionaries in northern Tanzania (Hodgson 2005) shows that Christianity is an unfolding process of becoming for missionaries too, though they have often been regarded as ethnographic embodiments or agents of "religion." Orta (2004, 2002) argues, for example, that Catholic missionaries in Aymara communities tell conversion, or rebirth, stories that draw upon the post-Vatican II theology of inculturation, emphasize their incorporation into "local" Aymara practices, and construct this as a pivotal shift in their self-understanding. Orta's research demonstrates that missionaries' faith is not given necessarily but avidly practiced, understood in social relations, and changing over time. I view retired American Lutheran missionaries' acts of remembering and reassessing their work in Madagascar in this light. These activities, dynamic practices *of* the everyday, further the continual process of reforming their person that is inseparable from the practice of Christianity.

Yet why is religion understood specifically as an everyday experience? This notion of religion *as* everyday social relations is a self-conscious construction of the Pietist genealogy from which American Lutheran missionaries stem (Taylor 1989, Meyer

1999:31).[15] In challenging the sacred mediation of priests and the institutionalized pilgrimage, Protestant Reformers urged their followers to live the everyday as a kind of Protestant pilgrimage, fostering what Taylor (1989:221) calls the "sanctification of ordinary life." Pietists in particular often used the image of the broad and narrow path from Matthew 7:13-14 as a way of conceptualizing the human road to salvation as the narrow or more difficult course: a sober and restrained everyday practice through which God would be revealed and made visible (Meyer 1999:31-38). Meyer writes, "Providing the didactics of Pietism, allegory and picture taught this worldview as a practice applicable in daily life; their worldview was thus not a mere picture of the world fixed in their minds, not a static religious system, but a way of linking the visible and invisible." (Meyer 1999:38). I explore in Chapter 1 how former missionaries to Madagascar identify

[15] Deeper connections exist between the Pietist notion of religion as everyday social relations and the contemporary focus on the everyday practice of religion in anthropology. For example, Poewe (1994) makes the argument that the method of participant observation, arguably the epistemological foundation for practice theory, derives not from the work of Bronislaw Malinowski but from the writing and approach of earlier Jesuit and Pietist missionaries. Poewe builds upon the work of several German ethnologists (Kramer 1986:8-9; Kohl 1987:44; Mühlmann 1984:45 cited in Poewe 1994:8) who argue that the three Jesuit missionaries Joseph François Lafitau (1670-1740), P. Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), and Louis le Comtes (1656-1729) developed the "methodological approaches" (systematic comparison, participant observation, and mirroring, or reflexivity) that later became important in the discipline of anthropology. The connection between these Jesuit missionaries and the Pietist movement can be found in the relationship between Ricci and the later Pietist missionary Karl Friedrich Gützlaff (1803-1851). Ricci, le Comtes, and Gützlaff were all missionaries to China. Gützlaff read Ricci's writing, made his work more widely known among Pietist missionaries to China, and emulated Ricci's practice of participant observation (*teilnehmende Beobachtung*) among the Chinese people with whom he lived (Poewe 1994:9). The widely influential English missionary James Hudson Taylor, who worked in China, also adopted his methods from the writing of Gützlaff. As Poewe describes, Gützlaff studied in Halle, Germany, the center of the German Pietist movement, where he was trained through the mission philosophy of August Hermann Francke (1663-1727). The influence of Francke and his teachers, as well as the fusion of Jesuit and Pietist missionary practices, produced several intersecting, and yet diverging, intellectual genealogies. Poewe (1994:9) writes,

> … Francke discussed the China mission extensively with the Enlightenment philosopher Leibniz. In the end, Francke rejected Leibniz' idea of *Kulturmission*, but that was not the end of the discussion. Their thoughts inspired radical Pietists, some of who … took Leibniz' ideas in the direction of nondenominationalism.

Poewe's discussion of the influential ties between twentieth-century anthropological methods and the work of earlier Pietist and Jesuit missionaries is an extremely suggestive and important one. Her necessarily brief historical analysis could be strengthened even more through tracing the immediate intellectual genealogies of Malinowski and his teachers.

and research their Pietist genealogy, but I carry throughout the dissertation my concern with examining how missionaries and their acquaintances understand Lutheranism as a practice of everyday social relations.

This approach has implications for how I understand theology. Rather than presume that believers follow a particular theological doctrine, I aim to examine how they come to debate and know the ambiguities of certain theological positions in daily life. Theology may be explored from historical, comparative, authoritative, and lay perspectives. I believe all four of these perspectives coexist and intermingle in daily life. Whenever possible, however, I attempt in the pages that follow to differentiate among them and to distinguish between 1) how people understand the "theology of ordinary life" in social relations (Taylor 1989:211); 2) how they work out tensions among these differing perspectives in daily life; 3) the sanctioned perspectives of Lutheran clergy who draw upon historical and comparative teachings; and 4) secondary sources that contextualize each of the above in historical and comparative terms. The fourth "perspective" is something I establish to a fuller extent in this Introduction and Chapter 1, while the initial two I interweave with the third throughout the dissertation as a whole.

Interestingly, Meyer (1999) points out that Max Weber acknowledged the tension between theological doctrine and everyday religious practice, yet did not fully pursue this idea in his own work.

> The path to monotheism has been traversed with varying degrees of consistency, but nowhere – not even during the Reformation – was the existence of spirits and demons permanently eliminated; rather, they were simply subordinated unconditionally to the one god, at least in theory. The decisive consideration was and remains: who is deemed to exert the stronger influence on the interests of the individual in his everyday life, the theoretically supreme god or the lower spirits and demons? If the spirits, then the religion of everyday life is decisively determined by them, regardless

> of the official god-concept of the ostensibly rationalized religion (Weber 1978[1922]:415-416 cited in Meyer 1999:xx).

This surprising statement endorses what several anthropologists of Christianity have since come to argue (Hodgson 2005, Robbins 2004, Orta 2004): that doctrine is unfolding, ambiguous, and debated in social life, rather than in existence prior to it. Writing with respect to her research among Peki Ewe Christians in Ghana, Meyer (1999:xx) notes, "The rationalization implied in world religions on the level of doctrine does not necessarily imply the closure of the doctrine and the disenchantment of the world in the praxis of lay believers."

I would like to draw the discussion back to one final finding in the literature on colonial missionization that bears particular relevance for my study. More recently, studies have analyzed colonial missionary encounters, as well as those involving colonists and explorers, as a process of mutual engagement and entanglement. "Local" populations never simply received Christian teachings from missionaries but interpreted and adapted them "to suit their own cultural logic," as Larson (1997:970) shows in his study of early Malagasy Christianity among highland Merina peasants. Prayer became one of the most important aspects of Christian practice for baptized Malagasy in the 1830s, and Malagasy Christians prayed through "collective public supplications," known as *fivavahana,* that were already well established in highland society (983). Because of the Malagasy association of Christian worship with prayer and *fivavahana*, Larson (1997) maintains that British missionaries in highland Madagascar were "obliged to transform their language and shift their theology to make it more compatible with Malagasy culture" (970). The missionaries in my research retrospectively consider their mission work as a comparable process of entanglement, driven by Malagasy Lutheran church

members, not only because of their mission theology but also the "post-colonial" setting in which they worked.

Before returning to the last point, it is important to underscore one additional theme from studies like that of Larson (1997), as well as several contemporary ethnographies of Christianity. Increasingly, scholars point to the existence of "diverse Christianities" (Cannell 2006:22) or what has alternately been referred to as "local appropriations of Christianity" (Meyer 1999:xix), the "vernacularization of Christianity" (Larson 1997:980), or "local implications of global missionization" (Orta 2004:15). These terms imply not only that Christianity includes widely different denominations and theologies, but more importantly that Christianity is historically particular, locally situated, and variable in the way people understand and live it. I see my research as a contribution to this scholarly argument and one that adds a missing regional perspective to it, since most of the ethnographic research I cite has been done outside North America. I do not intend to imply that American Lutheran missionaries share a fixed and unchanging variety of Christianity. Instead, they live and engage the colonial and post-colonial legacy of mission work in Madagascar through a complex series of "multi-sided and multi-sited" (Orta 2002:712) conversations and practices in Minnesota. Examining how Christianity is "locally" appropriated does not detract from its status as a global religion or faith with globalizing discourses. I argue that it enables us to better understand how specific believers conceptualize and place themselves in the Christian social world.

By focusing primarily upon American Lutheran missionaries, it is not my aim to privilege American missionary agency over Malagasy Christian practice in this study, but rather to examine the missionaries' Lutheranism as a transformed and transforming

practice. African Christianity, Meyer writes (1999:xix), is a "continuously developing product which is shaped by a great number of experiences." We could extend this argument to the Lutheranism of retired American Lutheran missionaries and their supporters in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Through their narratives and exchanges, missionaries make the case that they were indelibly shaped by the experience of life in southern Madagascar – and continue to live this experience in substantive ways. Whenever possible I bring in scholarship that illuminates the social history of southern Madagascar, as well as Christianity and nationalism in Malagasy history, in order to complicate and broaden missionaries' narratives from a comparative perspective. I spent time with missionaries who self-consciously characterized their lives in a different fashion from many scholarly depictions of colonial missionaries. I discovered that lifelong missionaries in my research, in fact, portrayed themselves as post-colonial missionaries as part of an effort to distinguish themselves from their "colonial" missionary predecessors on a socio-political, theological, and doctrinal basis.

Writing in 1974, T.O. Beidelman recognized how the responsibilities and role of foreign missionaries in late colonial and post-colonial periods were substantially different from that of early colonial missionaries. He observed at the time, "Today their careers consist in writing reports and records, supervising a large cadre of African staff, and in preoccupation with a great many technical activities far removed from preaching the Gospel, although, of course, clinics, classrooms, bookstores, and pharmacies are clearly related to the key activities by which missionaries were and still are able to secure contact with unbelievers and thereby preach their faith" (Beidelman 1974:243-244). While missionaries' responsibilities had changed considerably in many cases from that of their

predecessors, even those two generations removed, they may still have been representing their work to those at home in the familiar romantic terms of "encounter" that would garner financial support for the mission effort (243). Beidelman's points have serious implications for the use of mission archival sources. He suggests how crucial it is to carefully consider the audience and the multiple functions of what appear to be bureaucratic reports relating the "facts" of daily missionary life. But, perhaps more importantly for the discussion at hand, he indicates that late colonial and post-colonial missionaries oftentimes engaged in a different kind of work from that of their predecessors.

This point has been supported ethnographically through Orta's (2004, 2002) research with American and Polish Catholic missionaries in the Bolivian Andes. In Latin America, Roman Catholic missionaries engaged in a post-World War II "second" or "new evangelization." They aimed to revive church participation through techniques of evangelism decidedly different from that of their long line of predecessors; Aymara in the Bolivian highlands had been, as Orta reports, evangelized for four centuries, so this was not a situation of first contact or encounter between Catholic missionaries and Aymara Catholics. The post-Vatican II "theology of inculturation" crucially shaped how missionaries envisioned themselves and their role in Aymara local life. Orta contends that missionaries negotiate and understand their "complicated and coimplicated position" in Aymara locality through the significance of the "local" for Christian understanding in theologies of inculturation (2002:718). Catholic missionaries organized biographical narratives around this pastoral ideology, which characterized their transformation into local actors as a kind of spiritual rebirth. Theologies of inculturation, Orta argues, entail

both the "conversion of the missionaries [and] the evangelization of the Aymara" (2002:725). The empirical realities of Orta's research, focusing on a long and established interaction between missionaries and Aymara, indicates the need for scholarly approaches to the study of missionary evangelism that take these important factors into account.

Orta's ethnography of Aymara Catholicism in the Bolivian Andes is part of a growing literature that treats missionaries as "ethnographically complex subjects" (Orta 2002:710; Huber 1988; Beidelman 1982; Hodgson 2005; Huber and Lutkehaus 1999; Bowie et al. 1993; Comaroff and Comaroff 1990). Several of these studies examine the entangled and translocal practices of actively evangelizing foreign missionaries "in situ" (Orta 2002:712, Orta 2004; see also Hodgson 2005). My research differs from the latter because the American Lutheran (ELCA) missionary involvement in Madagascar has primarily ended. Through the dissertation, I argue that this involvement continues through specific social practices and in different institutional forms, such as non-governmental organizations. Nonetheless, I conducted research with former and retired missionaries, their families, and their acquaintances in Minnesota, rather than those actively engaged in mission work in Madagascar.

Methodology and Positionality

My dissertation research involved twenty-two continuous months of ethnographic fieldwork (December 2004 - October 2006) in Minneapolis/St. Paul and the Upper Midwest United States, as well as travel to southern Madagascar in November-December 2005. Additionally, I conducted preliminary interviews in Minneapolis/St. Paul in June-July 2003 and made a short follow-up visit to the Twin Cities in May 2008. During this

overall time period, my research focused upon two interrelated social processes: 1) practices to remember the mission movement and 2) the operation of new religious organizations that harness the resources and representational practices of the mission movement. In order to learn how the "past" is socially produced in the present, I attended worship services, prayer meetings, and social gatherings with former missionaries, their families, and fellow religious practitioners in Minneapolis/St. Paul. I also participated in a worship service with missionaries and Malagasy Lutherans in Manantantely, Madagascar, a former center of the American mission. When I mention "American Lutheran missionaries" within the dissertation, I am referring to the ELCA missionaries to Madagascar that I knew, a small portion of the total population of former missionaries to Madagascar.[16] I interviewed 40 people of varying positions and backgrounds in Minneapolis/St. Paul to examine how socially dominant representations and evaluations of the mission movement may be challenged, altered, or corroborated within personal narrations that take place in other social spaces, such as in the house.

Since the socially dominant stories of the past mobilize and reinforce important status distinctions within the mission, I purposively selected informants along four intersecting axes in order to learn from varying social actors within and among positions that were prescribed by the church: 1) ordained missionary pastors and non-clerical missionaries, such as medical doctors, nurses, teachers, and agricultural specialists; 2) short-term missionaries and long-term, or lifelong, missionaries; 3) male missionaries and

[16] In the dissertation, I also periodically use the terms "mainline Protestant" and "mainline Lutheran" in order to make the point that I refer to the American Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or its predecessors, rather than other Lutheran denominations in the United States. By using these terms, I do not wish to imply that certain Lutheran churches are "mainstream" while others are not; rather, the terms should signal that the ALC/ELCA arose at a specific historical moment in the early and mid-twentieth century when American Protestant denominations, including Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Lutherans, were consolidating and organizing large, national, and bureaucratic establishments.

female missionaries to whom official missionary status was not always granted by the church; and 4) former missionaries and their now-adult children. Additionally, I interviewed Malagasy Lutheran émigrés in Minneapolis/St. Paul, who form part of a small Malagasy diaspora in Minnesota and Wisconsin, in order to determine how they may understand the mission movement through their involvement with former missionaries in local religious organizations.

Secondly, my research involved two Lutheran non-profit organizations, Malagasy Partnership (est.1980) and International Health Mission (est.1987), which missionaries to Madagascar formed upon their return to the United States. Both agencies supply reconditioned and donated biomedical equipment to medical centers of the island-wide Malagasy Lutheran health department (SALFA), an arm of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. In order to investigate the labor process and representational practices surrounding medical aid, I worked for eighteen months as a volunteer laborer in the suburban Minneapolis headquarters of the two agencies. My research followed the transnational movement of medical supplies from Minnesota warehouses through Malagasy Lutheran clinics. I visited the headquarters of the Malagasy Lutheran health department (SALFA) in Antananarivo in order to examine how SALFA disburses medical supplies and monetary aid from both U.S. organizations to clinics throughout the island. I interviewed two SALFA employees who serve as primary liaisons to the American Lutheran aid agencies, and I observed two SALFA medical centers, a dispensary in Tolagnaro and a large regional hospital in Ambohibao outside Antananarivo.

Through these activities, the dissertation research examined the "humanitarian representational practices" (Malkki 1996:389) through which the two non-governmental organizations discursively characterized their work and enabled collective participation in the provision of medical care. However, through the flow of goods and conversation in the two warehouses, I studied how these representations became the subject of debate among volunteers and how the very materiality of the medical supplies prompted concerns about their evangelistic potential. Additionally, I examined how people of varying positions and backgrounds (e.g., American Lutheran missionaries and volunteers, Malagasy Lutheran medical practitioners, and SALFA employees) perceived medical aid transactions in light of the history of American Lutheran evangelism in southern Madagascar. By examining the medical supplies as material-semiotic forms, I investigated from a variety of perspectives how their material properties and interpretation contribute to the embodied practice of religion, the redefinition of Lutheran "worldly" engagement, and the production of history.

In my interactions with missionaries and their families, I was most often introduced first through the name of my paternal grandfather, who was an American Lutheran missionary to southeast Madagascar from 1932 to 1961, and secondly as a student of anthropology. Informants frequently questioned me about my father's family history. In these instances, people shared with me what they knew of my family history: one middle-aged man told me that when he was a boy he lived in the house my grandparents inhabited in earlier years in Madagascar, and he promised to bring me photographs of the house at our next meeting. In another case, an elderly couple told me that my grandparents had been good singers. Only a few minutes into our taped

interview, they opened pocket-size hymnals to a bookmarked page and then sang in dual-part harmony a Malagasy hymn that had been written by my great-great grandfather. Through my repeated verbal "placement" amidst networks of deceased kin relations who were missionaries, I was depicted as someone who had been ambiguously "away" (from Minneapolis/St. Paul, missions, Madagascar, and the church) yet had some understanding of the American Lutheran mission to Madagascar through family ties. This historical connection built trust with my informants but posed additional ethical dilemmas for me.

Though my father's family was deeply involved in Lutheran evangelism in Madagascar for three generations (from 1866 to 1961), my father made a break as an adult with the Christian church and his family's history of involvement in Madagascar. I was not raised as a Christian nor was I personally familiar with the Twin Cities until I began the preliminary research for my dissertation in 2003. Reflecting upon his research at the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in South Chicago, Robert Orsi (2005) has written eloquently about the ambiguities, anxieties, and existential dilemmas of doing research in a religious tradition with which one is, in some way, familiar.

> There is a muddle of unacknowledged transferences – the fieldworker in one's own discipline is kind of recognizable to practitioners and kind of not, and vice versa, and so each fills in the space of who they think the other is or wants them to be or fears they are, or all of this at once (162).

My fieldwork involved moving between and ambiguously occupying a variety of positions all at once and some more than others, depending on the situation: granddaughter, daughter, student, non-Christian, missionary descendant with a familiar last name, would-be anthropologist. The messy, ambiguous, and shifting terrain of these interactions was not a matter of me inadequately accommodating myself to the people

with whom I did research (for this would lack honesty and efface difference), but rather it was jointly produced through a "muddle of unacknowledged transferences," as Orsi astutely points out. The crucial problem to me throughout my research and writing has been not to make the dissertation into an exercise in boundary-making (of self and other, Christian and non-Christian, past family involvement and present interaction), but to try to keep these multiple, messy, and unresolved aspects of my experiences in view. I still worry that I have not conveyed adequately the complexity of these shared experiences and suspect I will be trying to do so for years to come.

Scholars have pointed out that doing research on Christianity in anthropology sometimes draws a series of personal questions from fellow anthropologists that other topics do not, ranging from queries about one's religious affiliation to one's political agenda (Cannell 2006:4; Robbins 2003b; Harding 1991). Cannell (2006:3) reasons that some of these questions stem from efforts to uphold the scholarly ideal of conducting research from a secular analytical perspective. She notes that the notion of such a secular approach, however, is a "fictional" creation that took shape through the early-twentieth-century development of sociology, anthropology, and religious studies. In response to what Cannell (2006:3) calls the "disciplinary nervousness" concerning research on Christianity, scholars sometimes provide caveats about their social positioning in their written texts that erect social, ideological, and political boundaries between themselves and their informants.

My mention of family history and other personal details is not meant to provide such a caveat, but rather to indicate how the ethnographic knowledge in this study is situated, partial, and shaped by the relationships between myself and my informants. My

status as a non-believer sometimes became a focal point of my interactions with informants. After I turned off the tape recorder during an interview at a Norwegian-American missionary couple's house in suburban Minneapolis, one woman retreated into a back room of the house, only to return a few minutes later with a tract that she slid across the dining room table to me. The title in bold black print on a green background, "Would You Like to Know God *Personally*?", was hard to miss. With a message inside from Bill Bright, the small brochure, published by New Life Publications of Campus Crusade for Christ, offered a concise version of the gospel of salvation in layman's terms. In another case, Emmanuel, a Malagasy Lutheran pastor and medical doctor that I knew in the Twin Cities, appealed to me several times on a scientific level and urged me to give Jesus a try in my life as a "working hypothesis." But most informants gently asked me questions, opened their lives to me, and let God do the rest.

A Few Notes on Archival Research, Sources, and Confidentiality

My research in the ELCA Region 3 Archives at Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, should be characterized as perhaps more ethnographic than archival. I grew familiar with several seminarians, who worked in the archives and gave me invaluable insight on Lutheran theological discussions. A kind group of retired missionaries, including former missionaries to Japan, Madagascar, and South Africa, volunteered in the archives on a weekly basis. With the volunteers' extensive knowledge of the collection and familiarity with the history of the church, our weekly coffee dates brought the archival materials to life and set them in the social relations of their production. I talked with the archivist Paul Daniels and his assistant Suzanne Hequet often, and they shared with me many observations from their perspective as long-term

Minneapolis/St. Paul residents, lifelong Lutherans, and historians. Besides encountering important primary source materials in the archives, I examined many seminal church books on the mission to Madagascar. I discovered that missionaries and their families kept these books in their own extensive personal collections, making them even more important for my analysis. Informants often lent me their own copies, as well as an array of church-produced films, tape-recordings, and pamphlets.

Books such as *Zanahary in South Madagascar* by Andrew Burgess (1932) and *Stories from Madagascar* by Nellie Dahl (1934), still found in contemporary missionary homes as well as those of supportive congregants, became canonical texts that translated the context of the mission for the lay reader. In particular, Andrew Burgess, a missionary to southeast Madagascar from 1924 to 1932, Norwegian Lutheran Church of America/Evangelical Lutheran Church secretary, and seminary professor, produced at least 14 volumes between 1930 and 1957, some co-written for children with his wife Constance Burgess. Burgess visited the mission fields of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (prior to 1946, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America) to take photographs and compile information from interviews with missionaries.

Burgess also consolidated prior written accounts on work in China, Tanzania, New Guinea, India, Alaska, South Africa, Colombia, and Japan that had been produced by missionaries and printed in church magazines, circular letters, and personal memoirs. Burgess' volumes on Madagascar share certain recognizable features: as many as 75 photographs, as in the 248-page *Zanahary*; recounted dialogues between missionaries and Malagasy Lutherans, *ombiasa* (ritual practitioners), and non-believers; evocative, poetic language; and titles that prominently incorporated Malagasy names and words for god

and the creator (e.g., *Zanahary in South Madagascar (1932)*, *Rahalahiko: My Brother in Madagascar (1938)*). Burgess' books on the ELC mission fields were printed in over 106,000 copies and distributed across the Midwest (Freese 2003, Personal Communication).

The mission histories of the 1930s not only provided vivid depictions of southern Madagascar for American readers but also established it as a distinct tradition of *their* church. By the mid-1930s English had become the dominant language of worship in most American Lutheran churches (Pederson 1980). English-language materials replaced or, in some cases, duplicated ones that were originally in Norwegian until Norwegian ceased to be the primary language of worship. Bookselling and book publishing in the 1930s worked to produce a "common literary and historical legacy" among members of disparate church bodies that had recently come together through a series of Lutheran church mergers in the United States (Ozolins 1972:16-18).

Moreover, financial donations decreased during the years of the Depression and the Lutheran missions suffered financially (Anderson 1988). Publications in the 1930s attempted to generate interest for foreign missions among American readers and to recoup crucial financial donations for them. Finally, for the Madagascar mission, the year 1938 celebrated the 50th anniversary of the American Lutheran mission to Madagascar, which began in 1888, and commemorated the 1837 death of Rasalama, the first "Malagasy martyr." (See Chapter 1) Throughout the dissertation, I reference Burgess' church-produced texts and other materials published beginning in the 1930s because they have been formative books in the lives of many missionaries I knew. Some grew up

reading books for children and adults that were written by Andrew and Constance Burgess. Many read *Zanahary* before they left for Madagascar.

As I conducted my fieldwork, I was not only reading historical accounts produced by people uninvolved in my research. Informants often gave me their voluminous research projects, theses, life histories, and memoirs to read. I quickly discovered reports and articles in the archives that other informants wrote while they were living in Madagascar or upon their retirement. Over time, I realized that my informants penned a number of important ethnohistorical accounts and primary sources that I needed to use in the dissertation. In order to facilitate the scholarly process of checking sources and conducting further research with them, I include complete bibliographic citations for all but one of these sources.[17]

Yet in order to protect the privacy of those who participated in my research – or at least to protect their privacy among readers unfamiliar with them – I have not openly acknowledged in the text that these accounts have been written by participants in my research. I do mention, of course, that these sources are ethnohistorical accounts written by American Lutheran missionaries and, in some cases, commissioned by the church. But I have made an effort to make it difficult for the uninformed reader to associate informants and authors. Though I grappled with this issue for some time, it is my hope that I have done what I can to protect my informants' privacy.

[17] The one source that I do not cite fully or accurately in the bibliography is the missionary memoir that I reference primarily in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4. I altered key details of this bibliographic citation (i.e., the title, the authors' names, and the publishing house) because I conducted ethnographic research with the family who produced the book. While I hope this will protect the family's privacy among those unfamiliar with them, I suspect many informants will quickly figure out their identity – as well as that of others – and I unfortunately do not see any easy answers to this quandary.

I use pseudonyms throughout the dissertation for my informants and their mentioned or quoted interlocutors; for specific congregations in the Twin Cities; for the medical non-profit organizations where I worked; and for the Minneapolis/St. Paul suburbs where these agencies are located. I have not concealed the current location of most missionaries in my study (Minneapolis/St. Paul), nor the cities and villages where they used to live in southern Madagascar. Following conventions for historical research, I use the real names of deceased missionaries whose writings are more than 50 years old. I also include the real names of deceased and living American Lutheran missionaries whose writing I cite and who did not participate in any fashion in my research.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into two primary sections. Chapters 1-4 examine the different ways that people remember, embody, and understand the "past" of American Lutheran missionary involvement in Madagascar. Chapters 5-6 explore how the representational practices, resources, and relations of the mission movement have been placed in the service of forming two Lutheran non-governmental organizations. These sections should not be seen as opposed to one another; rather, they form part of an integrated whole that moves collectively toward a more complex and dynamic portrait of missionary personhood and social relations in Minneapolis/St. Paul and beyond.

Through ethnohistorical accounts, Chapter 1 examines how former missionaries transpose places across three continents, linking Norway, the Upper Midwest, and southern Madagascar into two interwoven "kingdoms." Missionaries weave these places together through a series of stories with important religious and cultural figures that model ways to dwell in the world, or to have "one foot in the world and one in the

Word." These stories more implicitly describe class conflict among Norwegians and Norwegian-Americans, as well as the social and economic mobility that the Norwegian ancestors of American Lutheran missionaries experienced following late-nineteenth-century migration to the United States. Collectively, these stories communicate the spiritual value among missionaries of a kind of displacement produced by following God's call wherever it might lead. Chapter 2 endeavors to complicate some of the stories described in Chapter 1, which missionaries and their families circulate and reproduce primarily through written texts. In Chapter 2, I examine the historical and religious significance of Tanosy and Tandroy silver bracelets that missionaries and their families wear on a daily basis in Minnesota. The stories that surround the bracelets make specific, yet implicit and less discussed, claims about the history of missionary interactions in southern Madagascar, as well as the historical importance of material things as allegorical forms. While I do not find strong historical evidence to support some of the stories that missionaries tell about the bracelets, I point out that an examination of the bracelets shows how missionaries engage with the past of the mission not only through written texts but also through embodied material things that share a complex relationship with theological tenets.

In Chapter 3, I explore how missionary personhood continues to take shape through the former mission houses that dot the landscape of southern Madagascar. Through acts of remembering and revisiting houses in southern Madagascar, missionaries continue to inhabit the divisions and relations of gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and vocation that they enacted among themselves through domestic spaces, as well as with their Malagasy neighbors. I noticed in my research that missionaries' houses in

Minneapolis/St. Paul featured substantial "home displays" of Malagasy keepsakes. The chapter concludes with an analysis of how these displays form dynamic and processual dimensions of missionary personhood, which cannot be separated from other acts of remembering domestic life in southern Madagascar. Chapter 4 adds another layer of complexity to the formation of missionary personhood by suggesting that missionaries orient their religious identity in relation to the multiple institutions, revivals, and churches with which they have been involved in Madagascar and the Midwest. I suggest that, just as involvement in the *fifohazana* (awakening, revival) movement in Madagascar demands of its adherents a new temporal orientation, contemporary reports and stories of the *fifohazana* movement play a critical role in reconstituting the "past" of missionary involvement in southern Madagascar.

Drawing upon research with the two medical NGOs in Minneapolis, Chapter 5 examines how retired missionaries and volunteers reconstitute institutionally discarded or recovered medical supplies and make them into "called" sacred forms. I suggest this process should be viewed as a practice of ethical relations, which aid workers enact in relation to a mission past of inequity between American Lutherans and Lutherans elsewhere. Moreover, I investigate how volunteer workers organize their work through the religious language of "need," an historical notion in missionary communications that signals the importance of actively placing oneself in the wider Christian social landscape. Finally, through an examination of handwork projects, Chapter 6 sheds light on the person-like attributes of the medical supplies and on how their material form poses problems among volunteers for the way they may interpreted by aid recipients. Bandage-making is an important devotional practice for NGO supporters and an activity that

enacts socially valued qualities of personhood, such as productivity and efficiency. I show, however, that tensions arise for International Health Mission in trying to meet the needs of its two constituencies through handwork projects: American Lutherans and overseas Lutheran medical practitioners. This chapter shows that, through aid exchanges, Lutheran moral personhood is fragmented and enacted through a series of sent material things, conversations and moral assessments of one's labor, prayer, and unseen exchange partners.

CHAPTER 1:
"MADAGASCAR IN MY HEART": THE CONSTRUCTION OF DISPLACEMENT AS A LIVED THEOLOGY OF DWELLING

Introduction

In the brown rolling hills of western Wisconsin lies a former Air Force base, visible by its rusting metal watchtowers that arch over the ground. The property, framed on all sides by acres of farmland, the town of Osceola, and further away by the snaking St. Croix River, now holds a Lutheran retreat center. During three March days in 2005, signs of other places fill the remodeled spatial environment of the camp: phrases of sung Malagasy hymns; brewing coffee, strong and acrid; the taste of a jam made of fruit grown in Malagasy soil; and cool rolls of Norwegian *lefse*, a potato flatbread carried in one's hand. On the second morning of the retreat, the forty-nine attendants sit and take notes in cushioned metal chairs during a three-hour string of presentations on Colossians I, early nineteenth-century Norwegian Lutheran pietism, and the role of *mpiandry* (shepherds) in the disputed 2002 election of the Malagasy president. Worn volumes of *Zanahary in South Madagascar*, *Loharano,* and *Stories from Madagascar* adorn a brown folding table in the chapel where everyone assembles for the second day. Hundreds of color photographs and yellowed letters lay scattered across its surface, placed there "for *resaka* (Malagasy, conversation) and reminiscing" as one handwritten sign instructs.

At this gathering, a biennial reunion of retired American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar, the forty-nine participants collectively made small pilgrimages to Norway

and to Madagascar through their stories, songs, and flavorful gastronomy. The three-day reunion, now organized by a rotating roster of missionary couples, resembles quite closely the fellowship conference that missionaries formerly held in Madagascar. American missionary pastors, medical doctors, teachers, nurses, hospital administrators, and medical technicians – most lifelong paid missionaries, others short-term volunteers – met annually on the grounds of *Libanona* (Lebanon), a small peninsula on Madagascar's southeast coast. Besides taking communion in an English language service, voting on mission business, and holding devotionals, they walked from the peninsula, dotted with pine trees and a small assemblage of vacation houses, to the nearby American Lutheran cemetery, where they cleared debris from the cemetery plots and cleaned the gravestones.

The Wisconsin retreat recreated many of the fellowship activities of the Libanona gatherings. In the absence of their visit to the cemetery, the most recent retirees, a long-term medical missionary couple, showed photographs of the gravestones and projected on a screen the names of those buried in the cemetery. They allowed time in their presentation for individual reflection on the images of the names, heightening the sense that each person stood before the gravestones themselves. Moreover, throughout the retreat, the attendants scarcely mentioned the spatial environment of the Lutheran retreat center where they gathered in western Wisconsin, never collectively walking the grounds, discussing its history, or exploring the neighboring towns. The participants' lack of interest in the retreat center site became especially apparent in the three-day schedule of activities, which consisted entirely of classroom presentations that described and analyzed other places and times. These place-times included the *fifohazana* (awakening, revival) movement of Madagascar, which began in 1894; early nineteenth-century

Norwegian pietism led by Hans Nielson Hauge; and the 2002 presidential election in Madagascar.

I suggest this slightly curious focus on a selected set of more distant places rather than the retreat's immediate environment is, in fact, not incidental nor inconsequential. In addition to being formative places for the missionaries in the most straightforward sense, the reunion attendants' intimate engagement with specific place-times in Norway and in Madagascar – revisited *and* made distant through their immediate location in western Wisconsin – renews their Christian personhood and vision of moral community. The missionary reunion brings to the fore a fundamental paradox in many Protestant theologies: if this world is ultimately a point of passage to the next and Christians move through it as pilgrims and wanderers, how does one appropriately express attachment to place and dwell in the world as a Christian actor? As I hope to show, the answer to this question ultimately demonstrates how people live particular theological orientations and use specific engagements with place and time to further their spiritual and doctrinal aims.

Max Weber (1904-05[1958]:109) famously addressed this foundational paradox by arguing that the calling historically enabled Protestant sectarians to "promote the glory of God" in this world and thereby find assurance of their own salvation. [18] The doctrine of predestination made the uncertainty of God's will a particularly acute problem for Calvinists, with whom Weber grouped other sects of "ascetic Protestantism" like Pietists and Methodists (95). While acknowledging that Lutheran churches in Western Europe eventually absorbed seventeenth-century Pietism, Weber differentiated Calvinists from

[18] Weber (1904-05[1958]) points out that moral conduct became the "technical means not of purchasing salvation but of getting rid of the fear of damnation. In practice this means that God helps those who help themselves. Thus the Calvinist, as it is sometimes put, himself creates his own salvation, or as would be more correct, the conviction of it" (Chap. IV, 115).

Lutherans on the grounds that the latter did not follow the Westminster Confession of 1647 that established predestination (95). In contrast to many Lutherans, the Calvinists and other ascetics, Weber wrote, lived fearful of damnation since their individual destiny was "hidden in dark mystery," known only by God (103). Drawing upon the ideal type constructed through the term "Calvinists" in his work, Weber argued that ascetic Protestants detached themselves from the sensuous and material world through a process of rationalization he called the "disenchantment of the world" (*Entzauberung der Welt)* (see Peacock and Tyson 1989:56). The calling, then, offered some respite from the Calvinists' overarching alienation from the sensuous world and the inherent "inhumanity" of the doctrine of predestination (Weber 1904-05[1958]:104).

Weber tested these historical observations during a 1904 trip to the United States, when he participated in a German delegation to the St. Louis World's Fair (Peacock and Tyson 1989: 59). His subsequent article, "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," maintained that voluntary sect membership served as a "vehicle of social ascent" for those who demonstrated appropriate moral conduct in their everyday affairs (1904-05[1958]:308).[19] In their original and creative ethnography *Pilgrims of Paradox,* Peacock and Tyson (1989:114-115) pick up the subject of Weber's research by examining how Primitive Baptists of the Blue Ridge Mountains, who follow the 1647 Westminster Confession, live what informants call the paradox of being "pilgrims in a barren land." Their ethnographic research took place in the same region of Virginia and

[19] Weber conveyed some skepticism about the reasons why people join voluntary sects. His article, however, suggests that this skepticism was not only his but formed part of the way sect members evaluated each other for moral behavior. To this effect, Weber relates a story from his visit with an American relative to a Baptist congregation in North Carolina. The relative indicates that a man is joining the congregation because he "wants to open a bank" and could benefit economically from the moral qualities accorded to sect members (1904-05[1958]:304-5). Sect members were given certificates that could be used as "guarantees" of honesty in business transactions, opening up a network of business contacts (305).

North Carolina where Weber attended a baptism in 1904 with his American cousin (recounted in "The Protestant Sects") and where his relatives still lived at the time of Peacock and Tyson's study. Peacock and Tyson (1989) contend that Weber's focus upon doctrinal texts in *The Protestant Ethic* fails to capture the full extent of how doctrine is known through human relationships.

> The Primitive Baptists do reach a kind of resolution [to the problem of predestination], and it differs from that discerned by Weber. Their solution is not capitalistic striving to demonstrate their status as elect. They do work hard under harsh conditions, and some do well, but success is no indication of salvation. Rather, their solution is a shared understanding of the very ambiguity and paradoxicality of their lives as doctrinally framed (222).

What I draw from Peacock and Tyson's ethnography is a shared focus on the way people frame their lives in and through doctrine, effectively embodying their theological concerns, conundrums, and convictions. As Peacock and Tyson demonstrate, many believers enact a theory of dwelling in their daily lives – through songs, stories, fellowship, and key doctrine – that reveals their particular way of being Christians in the world.

In this chapter, I argue that the experience of displacement is a way of dwelling or being in place for former American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar. I begin the chapter with a discussion of how the literature on place might be successfully paired with recent research in the anthropology of Christianity. I then examine how missionaries understand their contemporary "displacement" from Madagascar through a selective series of transcontinental migrations set within a larger historical span, beginning with that of Norwegian *husmenn* (cotters), or sharecroppers. Many of the missionaries identify *husmenn* as their ancestors who traveled from nineteenth-century Norway to the United States (see, e.g., Olsen 2004). I show how the construction of displacement – a way of

dwelling – is ridden with persistent ambivalence concerning where missionaries belong; how they express their enduring connection to places where they no longer live; and, in light of the dissolution of the ELCA mission movement, how they negotiate their professional and religious identity in relation to these changing places.

Retired missionaries in Minnesota, I suggest, highlight in oral histories and written memoirs several points of transition in their lives and that of their ancestors: from Norway to the United States, from Norway to Madagascar, the Midwest to Madagascar, and Madagascar to the Midwest. They make these points of movement crucial hinges in a wider lived theology of place-making and place-relations. In this theology, the condition of perpetual *dis*placement is a spiritual experience that models the future full transformation of the world with the establishment of God's kingdom. These missionaries, then, actively turn their lives into symbols, for themselves and for others, of the Reformation virtue of treating ordinary life as a kind of Protestant pilgrimage.

Evangelical Protestantism, Missionaries, and Theories of Place

The extensive literature on pilgrimage in anthropology has analyzed how religious practitioners engage with sacred places through their occasional embodied movement in a pilgrimage circuit. Yet the more mundane significance of place memory, territorial passage, and representations of place for Protestant Christians have not received as much critical attention in anthropology (see, e.g., Mitchell 2001; Peacock and Tyson 1989; Kennedy Neville 1987). In this chapter, I bring observations from the literature on place in anthropology and philosophy together with recent research in the anthropology of Christianity. Only recently have anthropologists begun to analyze contemporary Christianity as a source and creation of "religious globalization." Indeed, Keane

(2007:44) makes the point that Christianity has been notably absent in discussions of globalization, perhaps due to the widespread notion that globalization has been a process of increasing secularism. While it is often acknowledged that Christianity is a global religion or a globalizing faith, less research exists that shows how Christians construct and imagine the global ecumene in their daily practice and compares how practitioners in different Christian traditions place themselves within the global communion. Additional research on these issues would illuminate how practitioners use "supralocal" commitments and organizations to sustain and imagine the global reach of Christianity (Keane 2007). But perhaps even more importantly, it would demonstrate how specific Christians use their engagement with places in order to further their spiritual aims, as well as how this everyday engagement gives shape to the fundamentally paradoxical relationship with place in most Christian theologies.

Place memory and images of place movement have been central to Christianity, particularly to traditions that closely follow the apostle Paul's example. Christianity is a religion of displacement and movement, which makes sense of the worldly Christian experience through abundant images of the wayward wanderer, pilgrim, and migrant. For lifelong missionaries, this is a foundational condition of existence, since they follow the example of ascetics in leaving behind their homes and families in order to become strangers and migrants in other places. They model for others the notion, as Sheldrake (2001: 41) points out, that all believers will one day be "travelers alone" in their salvation as they move from this world to the next.

During the apostolic period, Christian disciples placed moving outward from their homes into the "entire inhabited world, the *oikumene*," as their primary duty in preparing

for the second coming of Christ (Sheldrake 2001:33). It is important to distinguish the contemporary meaning of ecumenism in "global Christianity" from other forms of ecumenism that have shaped Christianity in different historical periods and places. These include the *oikumene,* as understood by the early Christians in the Graeco-Roman world, and the ecumenical effort of many European and American colonial missions, stemming from the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. Nonetheless, the early Christians expressed the fundamental tension in the religion between addressing the particularity of place in the Graeco-Roman world, which is seen in the naming of the Pauline letters after the places where the apostle Paul traveled, and making the Gospel message available to a geographically dispersed audience, which Jesus decrees in Acts 1:8 (2001:33).

Rather than being in one place, the experience of being betwixt and between places, always in relation to other places and "in transit," is one of the foundational metaphors in Christianity for encountering and experiencing God (Sheldrake 2001:34). Moreover, it is the person of Christ who forms the basis for revelation, in contrast to other traditions where the land or temple holds religious importance (37). Thus, Sheldrake (2001) suggests that place within the religion is ultimately known and made sacred in relation to the activities of Christ and subsequent holy people, such as ascetics, saints, and monastics. The Protestant Reformation challenged the legitimacy of saints, shrines, and the institutionalized pilgrimage on the grounds that the pilgrimage in particular endorsed the theology of salvation by good works. I would, however, extend some of Sheldrake's observations to missionaries in Protestant traditions, since they crucially mediate and locate places within a sacred landscape for other believers. Put another way, they perform and embody the pilgrim's journey for fellow Christians. They

make themselves into a symbol of living one's ordinary life in obedience to God's calling.

In her ethnography *Kinship and Pilgrimage*, Gwen Kennedy Neville (1987) contends that, rather than abandoning the pilgrimage altogether, Anglo Protestants enact a form of pilgrimage in the annual family reunion. Drawing upon research with Presbyterians of Scottish descent in the southern United States, Kennedy Neville argues that the Protestant reunion brings family members home after their experience wandering the world on their own, the inverse of the Roman Catholic pilgrimage. The family reunion, a "product of the colonizing migrations to the United States," attests to the social and geographic mobility of the participants (8). At camp meeting grounds, retreat centers, and old homesteads, the reunion participants temporarily reside in a communal setting, which reenacts the geographically united kin group of a past time (20). Interestingly, the Madagascar missionary reunion resembles quite closely the reunions that Kennedy Neville (1987:105) describes among southern Presbyterians, particularly what she calls the "denominational summer community or conference center."

Where they differ is in the fact that the missionaries' families, on the whole, remain absent from their retreat. This highlights the fact that the called missionaries form a "missionary family" that is distinct from their kinship ties with children and grandchildren, a subject that I address further in Chapter 3. Missionaries celebrate separate reunions in their extended families that venerate a homestead, family farm, or historically significant park or town. But what is perhaps most striking about the missionary reunion is that it provides an inverse example of what Kennedy Neville describes: if missionaries exist as prototypic Protestant pilgrims, they revisit the sociality

of traveling along the pilgrimage route, *away* from their families, in their own reunions. Their reunions, in particular, heighten the experience of travel that serves as a constitutive force and as a symbol of their lives.

Within Lutheranism, the doctrine of the two kingdoms expresses this foundational tension of being betwixt and between places. Luther's "two kingdoms" teachings delineate two spheres of Godly rule: the worldly or temporal where God rules through law and the spiritual in which God is known through the gospel and through grace. For Luther, Christians participate in the fulfillment of God's kingdom while residing in this world.[20] The doctrine of the two kingdoms has been interpreted and reinterpreted through the development of the modern nation-state and the Enlightenment identification of a distinctly "secular" sphere of public life that is distinct from religion. While Luther's teachings on the two kingdoms have been understood through this lens, scholars point out that for Luther, and in many present-day Lutheran interpretations of his writing, churchly authority formed part of the worldly or temporal kingdom, making such a separation

[20] Scholars suggest Luther, originally a member of the Augustinian monastic order, based his discussion of the two kingdoms on St. Augustine of Hippo's writings on the "two cities" of God and of man (Walz et al. 2003:145), as well as the apostle Paul's distinction between the "Age of Adam" and the "Age of Christ," typologically contrasted epochs (Lazareth 2001:95-104). In Romans 5, Paul describes how Christ atoned for human sin and he contrasts the triumph of death under Adam with the grace and righteousness that dominates through Jesus Christ. Each of these notions characterizes the dualism of the human Christian condition in spatiotemporal terms. Westhelle (2003:10) notes that this genealogy of the two kingdoms teachings is complicated by Luther's inconsistent use of terminology: "kingdoms" (*reiche*) and "governances," or "regiments" (*regimente*). While the former term draws from Augustine's distinction between the "two cities," the latter term "retrieves the main elements of the medieval theory of two powers (*potestates*), or swords (*gladii*)" (10). Westhelle argues that a reevaluation of the two kingdoms teachings with these terminological distinctions in mind reveals that they reflect two "regimes" whereby the spiritual regime is not an "alternative realm" but may be conceptualized as a difference to the "prevailing regime" (25). He asserts: "In the regimes of power and knowledge, of work and reason that are in place in this world, Luther's spiritual reality is a difference, a counter-point in the order of things; it is another regime, a different regime" (Westhelle 2003:25). From this perspective, the two kingdoms doctrine does not teach believers to occupy themselves with a separate realm of spiritual life, or to see a clear division between the kingdoms of God and of the world, but instead instructs believers to challenge the prevailing worldly "regimes" with alternative forms of action and justice (in its social and theological senses).

untenable (Westhelle 2003).[21] Contemporary Lutheran theological interpretations emphasize that the two kingdoms delineate two "strategies" of divine activity (Nessan 2005:306). One is the proclamation of the Gospel and the delivery of the Holy Sacraments. The second is the "establishment of just order" through institutions of the state, family, law, education, and church (306). In this reading of Luther's work, the "two kingdoms" may be interpreted as the warring kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God. The two kingdoms strategies attempt to effect the fulfillment of the kingdom of God that forms the eschatological foundation of hope for the world within Lutheran theology (305).

Among Lutherans, the spiritual call is the primary means through which to unify the two kingdoms or to "sanctify ordinary life" (Taylor 1989:218-221). The call's special status is especially pronounced for missionaries, whose personal call by God in this world has been reinforced through the official "call" of the church institution. In a divinity thesis based on research with Norwegian-American missionaries, Preus (1974:31, my emphasis) notes:

[21] These teachings have become emblematic of some of the "social failures" of Lutheran churches within the twentieth century, including the overwhelming "political quietism" or complicity of German Lutheran churches regarding the rise of the Nazi regime and the historical lack of national political involvement by the American Lutheran churches (Nessan 2005:303; see also Walz et al. 2003:145; Lazareth 2001:2-30). These critiques suggest that the two kingdoms theology curtails the extent of Lutheran political involvement because it construes politics as an autonomous sphere of social influence that is distinct from religion. Within this point of view, religion becomes something largely private through a greater societal separation of church and state.

The strong anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism contained in Martin Luther's writings has also come under scrutiny as a source of anti-Jewish sentiment during and leading up to the Nazi occupation. The subject remains a concern for Lutherans in the United States. In 1993, the ELCA issued a public statement "addressed to the Jewish community that 1) repudiated the anti-Judaic rhetoric and violent recommendations of Martin Luther and grieved the tragic effects of such words on subsequent generations and 2) affirmed our desire to live out our faith in Jesus Christ in love and respect for the Jewish people by pledging to oppose the deadly working of anti-Semitism in church and society." The ELCA declaration is now included in a program at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. (Erling 2003:60).

> This call is not essentially different from the call any Christian might feel to his particular work. The difference is the *uprooting* involved; one does not leave his home and family unless he feels quite strongly that God wants him to do so.

The missionaries in my research usually had to demonstrate that they had received a call from God in order for the church to offer them a position. One man, who worked as a mission schoolteacher in Madagascar from 1961 to 1980, told me that he had an interview with an ALC/ELCA official when he was being considered to fill a teaching post at the "American School" in Fort Dauphin/Tolagnaro. The official's task in the interview was to determine if God had called the man and his wife to mission work. In response to this question, the couple described the "doors" they felt had been opened for their family to travel to Madagascar: a supportive Christian medical doctor who cared for their ailing son, the woman's "prayer of relinquishment" to God for help with their son's illness, and the boy's consequent improvement and release from the hospital.

American Lutheran missionaries employed many representational forms, such as songs, maps and firsthand accounts, to make Madagascar visible and known to congregants in the Midwest. People I knew indicated that it was through these selective representations that they came to understand their spiritual calling to Madagascar. Many American Lutheran missionaries, as children and young adults in the Midwest, initially knew the island through the oral and written stories that other missionaries told, before they became missionaries themselves. Lynn, a short-term missionary medical technician, grew up about sixty miles south of the Twin Cities, where his parents owned a dairy farm and belonged to an historical Lutheran Free Church congregation. Every summer missionaries who were temporarily on leave would come by the church to give presentations about the international locales where they ordinarily lived. Additionally,

Lynn's uncle, his father's younger brother, served as an American Lutheran missionary doctor in southeast Madagascar for ten years after finishing an army tour during the Korean War. Lynn would carefully read every letter that his "favorite uncle" sent home and eagerly awaited hearing his stories when he came back to Minnesota from Madagascar. Lynn's father's best friend from childhood had also become a missionary doctor and worked at the Mseleni Mission Hospital in South Africa. Every year the family raised one of their bull cattle for the Mseleni Hospital, giving away the proceeds of the bull's sale. Lynn knew neighbors who donated a percentage of their farm field's yield to missions, this land being their "mission field."

Representations of the mission fields of the church thus came to be entangled inseparably with the experience of immediate places in the Midwest. From an early age, missionaries had been taught to envision Madagascar as a place of sacred activity – they did this through reading letters and hearing presentations, viewing photographs, and by imagining the seemingly far-off locales of missionaries through the more immediate environment of their own farmland. This was not necessarily the Madagascar that missionaries knew in their everyday lives but the Madagascar that figured prominently as a devotional form within the American Lutheran church.

Scholars writing about place in anthropology have demonstrated that places and relationships among places gain coherence and shape through people's stories and embodied practices (Casey 1987; Basso 1996). Keith Basso (1996:75) has persuasively shown how Western Apache use place stories to establish moral qualities of personhood, make experience intelligible, and form "deep and abiding connections" to each other, "regardless of where they travel." He writes,

> Thus, just as *'ágodzaahí* stories are "about" historical events and their geographical locations, they are also "about" the system of rules and values according to which Apaches expect each other to organize and regulate their lives. In an even more fundamental sense, then, historical tales are "about" what it means to be an Apache, or, to make the point less dramatically, what it is that being an Apache should properly and normally entail (52).

While I recognize that the differences of story-telling and place engagement among Western Apache and the missionaries in my research are many, I aim to take seriously the way missionaries dwell in the world as social actors through the stories they tell.

The environment in which people dwell is inherently social, reflecting their historical and contemporary movement across and within places. This interaction constitutes at once a personal and social experience, allowing for diverse understandings of places within societies, mediated by specific, collective histories. Basso writes,

> For the self-conscious experience of place is inevitably a product and expression of the self whose experience it is, and, therefore, unavoidably, the nature of that experience … is shaped at every turn by the personal and social biography of the one who sustains it (Basso 1996:55).

Within this chapter, I use the term place rather than moral geography, transnational movement, or sacred space in order to highlight the mutual constitution of personhood that the concept of place in anthropology and philosophy presumes.

My evidence in this chapter comes primarily from books and other ethnohistorical written accounts that communicate how American Lutheran missionaries locate themselves in place and time. These books, as material things, and the stories conveyed through them form part of missionaries' everyday experience. Books feature prominently in missionary living rooms, sitting on coffee tables and contextualizing the Malagasy keepsakes I describe further in Chapter 3. Most missionaries also have larger, more

extensive book collections they keep in living room bookcases or in their home offices. In my visit with Hank in May 2008, he walked downstairs in his bi-level condominium to collect several books that he had been reading. They sat beside his office computer. One was the missionary T.T. Matthews' 1904 account *Thirty Years in Madagascar*, which Hank explained he was reading because he had not previously read it cover to cover. During each of our many previous conversations at his house, Hank pointed out a different text that he was reading: for example, in April 2005, we discussed the primatologist Allison Jolly's 2004 book *Lords and Lemurs,* which captured missionaries' interest in Minneapolis/St. Paul not only because they had known Jolly personally but also because it described the multi-generation involvement in southern Madagascar of the French de Heaulme family.[22]

I grew aware over time, however, that Hank's reading was more than a way of acquiring knowledge; it was a spiritual practice. Sometimes Hank gave me the impression that he was reading books to trace the historical movement of more mysterious forces, like that of the Holy Spirit: Hank implied that T.T. Matthews' account, for example, "revealed" or uncovered things that he had not before known. Moreover, missionaries included in their own writing projects the place-based stories that I describe in this chapter, furthering the chain of their social importance through the written text. They made it apparent, by drawing attention to these historical episodes in their memoirs (e.g., the Malagasy martyrs, Norwegian immigration to the United States), that they framed and understood their lives through them.

[22] Hank commented to me that Jolly had not been "kind" to missionaries in her book, which I heard from other missionaries I knew as well: she included several vignettes that portrayed American Lutheran missionaries in a rather unfavorable light. This was surprising to some missionaries, Hank explained, because they got to know Jolly personally; she lived for a while in a mission house in the southeast and sent her children to the missionary boarding school or *Tranovato* for several years.

Former missionaries to Madagascar actively produce and sustain their experience of *dis*placement from Madagascar today through this specific social landscape of place-relations and place memories. Their personhood is fragmented and known in relation to these places. One recently published memoir entitled *Beyond Madagascar*, written by the son of Norwegian immigrant missionaries who served from 1916 to 1954, begins the final chapter on Madagascar with these evocative statements:

> I have journeyed beyond Madagascar, never leaving it far from my heart, only to find that Madagascar, too, has recently been on her own spiritual journey [through the 2002 presidential election and *fifohazana* movement]. The Holy Spirit has moved among the people and they followed their Lord.
>
> Madagascar is still a part of me. It is a place of dreams and hope and the memories of childhood – my family and my foundation and the friendships I hold most dear. It is a witness to God's grace and His love for the Malagasy people who are amazingly spiritually alive today (Braaten 2006:230).

As this writer did, missionaries suggest sometimes that their "heart" is in Madagascar or even contend, "Madagascar is *in* my heart." They express an enduring connection to the island in these laments by indicating that their heart remains partly there or that their heart stores their spiritual relationship with Madagascar. Retired and former missionaries in particular, more than their children, signal with this religious language that they received a divine call to Madagascar (or, in more commonly used terms, that they "have a burden for Madagascar"). The heart is conventionally understood to be the individual's soul or the inner, unseen, and relational space of communication with God. To suggest that the heart lies in Madagascar or that Madagascar lies in the heart is to indicate that, for the speaker, Madagascar holds sacred qualities.

The interior space of the heart, which missionaries call upon, has been traced historically to the influence of sectarian movements, such as Pietism, that taught followers to improve their inner life, or personal relationship with God, as they fulfilled

their spiritual calling in the world (Taylor 1989; Dumont 1985; Mauss 1938[1979]). Yet the writings of Reformers like Calvin seem to suggest that the development of the inner space of the person may be linked to the earlier church transformations of the Reformation period. Formerly regarded as the primary intermediary between the world beyond and the present world, church institutions came to be seen by Reformers as corrupt and too "inworldly" (Dumont 1985). In a symbolic inversion that challenged the authority of the established church, Calvin's writings indicated, then, that people carried the "kingdom of God within themselves," according an "inworldliness" to the person (Dumont 1985:106,112). One might argue that, in locating the kingdom of God within themselves, Reformers increasingly alienated themselves and their fellow Protestants from the natural environment and the places of the world around them. But despite the profane status of the earthly world in many Protestant theologies, I argue that practitioners have a far more complex, enduring, and ambivalent relationship with place in lived everyday life.

In the following section, I consider how missionaries to Madagascar "participate actively in their own cosmology and theology" (Mitchell 2001:9) through the selected place-relations, stories, and historical figures of southern Madagascar, Norway, and the Midwest United States. Rather than being neatly organized into a kind of pilgrimage circuit or a teleological framework, these places and place names "flesh out" and bring into everyday life certain crucial points of doctrine, cosmology, and history. In particular, through its central role in their spiritual calling and professional lives, Madagascar concentrates the sacred for many missionaries and their families in the face of less certain signs about the course of divine activity elsewhere.

Tracing the Connections of Norway, the Midwest U.S., and Madagascar

At the retreat in western Wisconsin, the second husband of a missionary to Madagascar, a retired mathematics professor, assembled the theological linkages between American Lutheranism and the figure of Hans Nielson Hauge (1771-1824). The professor and his wife had participated in a two-week religious history tour in Norway during the summer of 2004, where they traced the life of Hauge under the guidance of a Norwegian-American theologian. Hauge's pietist genealogy formed a passionate retirement investigation for the professor, who published a book on Lutheran pietism and a series of articles in the local Lutheran press. In the article he presented at the missionary reunion, the professor noted that, while long dead, Hauge "still speaks." In some ways, the pastor was making the point that among many retired American Lutheran missionaries and others, Hauge is precisely not a *historical* figure per se but has become iconic of a particular way of being a Christian in the world. Hauge epitomizes the implicit dualness of Lutheran theology, since he preached economic advancement to Norway's peasantry while encouraging lay involvement in the church. As the professor explained in one article, "Hauge had one foot in God's Word and the other in God's world."

Missionaries follow Hauge's lead in their own lives through key stories that enlist movement and migration as sources of spiritual renewal. When I asked about the history of the mission, they often reviewed certain well-rehearsed storylines: the Malagasy martyrs, the history of Norwegian pietism, immigration from Norway to the United States, and the story of the first American Lutheran missionaries. Certain figures feature prominently in these stories – Hauge, the Malagasy martyrs, Queen Ranavalona I, Georg Sverdrup, and J.P. Hogstad – and their narrated activity, whether of revival, sacrifice, or

persecution, sanctifies the places where they lived. Moreover, because of their particular position within the narrative flow of these stories, these figures enact bridges, like Hauge, between this world and the next. They illuminate points of transition and displacement as sources of spiritual renewal, imbuing change with positive value. While laying out these important episodes and figures in the chapter, I aim overall to keep in view how missionaries and their relations use these stories in their everyday lives.

One could make the argument that this is ultimately a collective story of modernity, or, alternately, of the development of middle-class consciousness, which the missionaries tell themselves about themselves. I maintain in my discussion that this story constitutes a kind of middle-class nostalgia, a tale of rural-to-urban migration and of self-actualization, but also that it is something more. Altogether, this collection of stories with vibrant social actors, the missionaries' present-day counselors and coworkers, amount to a lived theology and cosmology. To view it, then, *only* as a triumphant narrative of capitalist accumulation or of imperialism through migration elides the more subtle and ambivalent dimensions of this narrative and how it simultaneously serves certain spiritual and doctrinal positions. In the face of generations of migration and transcontinental mobility, these stories reclaim kinship as a constitutive yet ultimately divisive force in Norwegian rural settlements and in sectarian conflicts in the United States. In the 1880s, Norwegian-American theologians made the argument for the establishment of a mission to Madagascar precisely on the basis that it might enable cohesion and "healing" among Norwegian-American Lutherans in the Midwest, known for their acrimonious disputes.

In the remaining sections of the chapter, I supplement the oral histories and ethnohistorical accounts that I heard and read, as they were given to me by informants,

with scholarly work that illuminates some of the gaps and erasures in these histories. These scholarly pieces should not be seen, however, as being completely at odds with missionary accounts. Missionaries that I knew avidly sought out scholarly work that elaborated such subjects as the historical connection of Madagascar and Norway, the story of the Malagasy martyrs, the original peopling of Madagascar, and nineteenth-century immigration from Norway to the United States. Their reading reinforces the underlying notion within these stories that the Word circulates actively among the continents – and continues to do so – through accounts of the Malagasy martyrs, stories of mission work sent home, and keepsake books carefully stored in immigrant trunks. The migration of people appears almost secondary to this larger process of expanding the reach of the Gospel.

Norwegian Pietism, Hans Nielson Hauge, and "Occupational Emancipation"

Hauge, a lay revivalist, is a particularly crucial religious and cultural figure among retired missionaries to Madagascar. The nineteenth-century Norwegian mission movement, from which the American Lutheran mission establishment first originated with immigration to the United States, stemmed largely from seventeenth and eighteenth century Pietism. Many of the same figures that prompted the development of German Pietism directly influenced the Norwegian pietist movement that grew under the leadership of Hans Nielson Hauge. Like German Pietism, the movement of Hans Nielson Hauge challenged the Lutheran orthodoxy, which had a hegemonic influence in Norway from about 1600 to 1850 (Nyhagen Predelli 2001:6). At the missionary reunion, the mathematics professor traced the pietist genealogy from the German Lutherans Johann

Arndt (1555-1621), Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), August Herman Francke (1663-1727), and Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) to the influential Danish pastor Erik Pontoppidan (1698-1764) who served as the bishop of Bergen, Norway, and finally to Hauge himself.

The direct link between the Haugean movement and the Lutheran Free Church, founded in the United States in 1897, is Gisle Johnson (1822-1894). A Haugean pietist, Johnson became an important figure in the Norwegian Missionary Society, which was formed in 1842, and held an influential post as a theology professor at the University of Oslo. Lagerquist (1999:15) writes, "Scandinavia was awash in later waves of pietism just as immigration to the United States was taking place. Many immigrant trunks contained a copy of *True Christianity* [a devotional book by Johann Arndt], a catechism, and a Bible." Georg Sverdrup, one of the two founders of the Lutheran Free Church with Sven Oftedal, studied with Johnson in Oslo prior to leaving Norway for the United States (Varberg nd:5). Sverdrup identified with Hauge's message on the centrality of the laity in the life of the church, congregational freedom, and Lutheran piety (Dyrud 2000:10).

Pietists like Hauge expressed ambivalence concerning the transformation from the rural, agrarian way of life that many led in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to greater urbanization and the social problems they associated with this process (Meyer 1996:202). Yet Pietists simultaneously embraced practices that corresponded with the expanding capitalist economy of the time, such as self-discipline and asceticism (Meyer 1996:203, 1999:30). One of the professor's articles, which was published in 2005 in the Lutheran press in Minneapolis, notes that Hans Nielson Hauge has been hailed as "the first modern Norwegian" precisely because of his skill in bringing together the

church revival and specific programs for economic improvement among the Norwegian peasantry. Beginning in 1796, Hauge, a peasant farmer himself, traveled throughout Norway, urged his followers to repent for their sinfulness, and preached abstinence from the morally corrupt activities of drinking, card playing, and dancing, while also teaching agricultural techniques, blacksmithy, carpentry, and beekeeping (Lagerquist 1999:15). As a result of the 1741 Conventicle Act, which prohibited lay preaching and prayer meetings in Norway until 1842, Hauge typically met his followers in homes and "mission houses," activities that resulted in his being jailed on several occasions throughout his lifetime.

Hauge's primary message of "occupational emancipation" resonated with a large sector of the Norwegian peasant population from the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth century. In his study of nineteenth-century migration from Balestrand in mountainous western Norway to the United States, Gjerde (1985:56-58) argues that the division of wealth between landowners and landless peasants increased even as production per capita grew among all social classes in Balestrand throughout the nineteenth century. This thesis diverges significantly from other historical accounts, which have proposed that Norwegians emigrated to the United States in the nineteenth century because overpopulation and outdated farming techniques in the peasantry produced a shortage of food.

Among cattle farming families in Balestrand, the practice of impartible inheritance dictated that the oldest living son inherited the family land through a line of descent called the *ætt* (Gjerde 1985:47). With rapid population growth in Balestrand between 1800 and 1855, this practice over time produced a small number of landowners and a much larger group of peasants who pursued wage labor to supplement or supplant

meager farming revenue, including cotters or sharecroppers (*husmenn*), cotters without land (*husmenn uten jord*), and shore-sitters (*strandsidderer*) (7). Not all people practiced impartible inheritance, but even among those who divided their land into parcels for subsequent generations the land allotments became increasingly small. Farming was not therefore the only livelihood in any one region of Norway in the nineteenth century, but formed part of an economy that included shipbuilding, fishing, lumbering, carpentry, basketmaking, and coopering (58). The growing class of landless Norwegians had migrated internally to the less populous north, to cities, and from "land-poor" mountain areas to the western and southern coasts since at least 1750. Along the sea, migrants could combine a livelihood of farming and fishing or more easily obtain farmland due to the higher rate of disease mortality (12-15).

Economic conditions in nineteenth-century Norway varied widely by *bygd* (rural community or country district) and their divergent ecozones, as did social customs for inheritance, courtship, and marriage. In fact, within each dale, valley, and fjord, economic transformation cannot be examined separately from the changing practices of marriage, kinship, and religion that influenced and resulted from the widening social chasm between the landed and the landless. Due to social prohibitions on public affection, peasants in many regions practiced "bundling" or night courting (*nattfrieri*), an arrangement that permitted young men to visit women in their rooms on Saturday night and to spend the night eventually with, and sometimes without, the promise of future marriage (87-89). The custom resulted in many premarital births. For example, in Balestrand, by the late 1850s one out of every six children was born out of wedlock (107). In areas practicing impartible inheritance, such as Sogn where Balistrand is

located, premarital births comprised a higher percentage of all births than in areas where land was divided into small parcels (19). The reason for this, Gjerde (1985) argues, lies in the fact that landless peasants could draw upon sources of income other than farming, permitting them to marry at a younger age, while impartible inheritance placed restrictions on when the children of landowners, particularly the eldest son, could acquire a source of income and marry (95-96). The longer life expectancy among many landowners in the nineteenth century, as compared with the previous century, further delayed the age of inheritance for the primary heir (86).[23]

Night courting became a major issue of concern for the Norwegian state church in the nineteenth century, as well as a moral problem that divided many of the landed and landless, landless peasants who practiced the custom and landless pietists who forbade it, and the growing middle class from the peasantry. Opponents of night courting identified sleeping arrangements as the cause of "bundling" and thus the high number of premaritally conceived children. Gjerde (1985:90) notes, "As early as the mid-eighteenth century, the theologian Erik Pontoppidan visited Inner Sogn and complained about disorder in the cowbarn, a euphemism for night courting, and the objectional practices (*uskikk*) that resulted." In Balestrand, the overseeing Lutheran pastor attempted to impose fines for night courting, to recruit residents to report incidents among their neighbors, and to punish those who were caught (108).

The Haugean pietist movement gained the strongest following along the southern and western coasts of Norway, which were characterized as the "dark coastal strip" because of their religious fervor (Gjerde 1986:686). Many coastal Haugeans perceived

[23] Gjerde (1985:6) notes that Norway's population increased rapidly in the half century after 1815 due to several factors, including the introduction of the potato and potato cultivation, a period of national peace, and the smallpox vaccination.

both cities and the inland mountainous regions to be morally depraved, since the latter tended to practice night courting disproportionately with the coasts in the early and mid-eighteenth century (1986:684). Peasants affiliated with the Haugean revival, called "friends," and those involved in a series of smaller religious awakenings espoused a strict moral code for behavior, met for Bible study with lay preachers, and typically banned alcohol from local celebrations in Sogn, a rather rare practice at the time (Gjerde 1985:110-114). Hauge taught his followers techniques of economic advancement, but served overall to heighten divisions among the landless in nineteenth-century Norway rather than to build a unified peasant movement (Munch 1980:7-8).[24]

"Bitterly Fought" Battles: Migration and Conflict among Norwegian-Americans

Migration from Balestrand did not only include the landless and, in fact, Gjerde (1985:8,115) found that landed farmers comprised a majority of early immigrants to the United States. They left western Norway in an effort to increase their wealth for their children and to ensure the practice of "old values," including the prohibition on night courting and premarital births (9). These reasons became paramount for many landless Norwegians who emigrated to the United States between 1825 and 1925, as well, since the rifts within the landless class only heightened the desire to leave Norway and tended to revolve primarily around moral issues of proper behavior (115). After the three-month journey to the U.S. by wooden ship, Norwegian migrants organized themselves in small "colonies" based on their region or parish of origin, dialect, and church affiliation, often moving as a group several times in North America before developing a stronger, more

[24] Hauge is remembered in Norway today as much for his business savvy as for his religious principles, and his economic lessons are taught in many universities.

lasting tie to a particular region in the Midwest (Gjerde 1985:140-141). The practice of chain migration meant that earlier emigrants wrote letters (which were sometimes copied hundreds of times) to their former neighbors and villagers in Norway regarding the availability of land, helped them financially with the passage to North America in some cases, and then housed them in a string of stops as they traveled westward from Wisconsin to Minnesota for land (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:5-8; Legreid and Ward 1982:13).

Norwegian migration began in 1825, with the first boat *Restauration* sailing from Stavanger to New York, but the heaviest migration occurred between 1865 and 1900. More than 800,000 Norwegians emigrated to the United States from 1860 until 1890, a figure only surpassed in terms of the per-capita emigration from Ireland to the United States in the same time period (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:2). Not surprisingly, emigration from the regions of Telemark, Sogn, Valdres, Hardanger and Voss, Hallingdal, Sunnhordland, and Numedal, all either mountain regions or those along the southwestern coast, provided the most Norwegian migrants from 1856 to 1865 (Gjerde 1985:22).

One missionary pastor that I knew, Karl, recounted in a recent memoir that his paternal great-grandfather and great-grandmother, at the time age 57 and 48 respectively, emigrated with their seven children in 1868 from Vestre Toten, Norway. The family eventually acquired five acres of land in Winneshiek County, Iowa, for which Karl's great-grandfather paid $50. The couple's second oldest son married a Norwegian immigrant in the U.S. whose ancestor, a lay preacher, reportedly traveled the Norwegian countryside with Hans Nielson Hauge. The son followed suit by working as a lay preacher in the North American Hauge Synod, and he and his wife had nine children.

One of the couple's sons was Karl's father, who was born in Iowa in 1870. After the sudden death of Karl's grandfather, the entire family moved to Waseca County in southeastern Minnesota in 1872, where they purchased 80 acres of land the following year (Olsen 2004:1-7).

Karl's father would eventually meet and marry Karl's mother, the granddaughter of a Norwegian *husmenn,* in this region in 1899. In 1880, both Karl's mother's and his father's families moved together to northwest Minnesota. They initially established farms forty miles apart, but then moved a second time to New Solum Township in Marshall County, where they both lived a half mile from each other by 1884. Both families became founding members of the local Hauge Synod congregation. Karl's maternal grandfather was an especially well-known lay evangelist, who traveled and preached at fellowship meetings throughout northwest Minnesota from 1890 until his death in 1909. Karl's parents, farmers in northwest Minnesota, rented land all their lives and struggled to make a living. Born in 1915, Karl recalls his father leading him and his seven siblings each morning in prayer, "confessing his sins before God and then praying for each child" (8). Throughout their financial struggles, Karl's parents held their lay preaching heritage in high esteem. He remembers his mother praying with her family and singing her favorite hymn, "My Heart Is Longing to Praise My Savior," while doing household chores (Olsen 2004:7).

Most immigrants, like Karl's family, obtained land in the U.S. from land offices, some from speculators. In their study of Norwegian immigration to western Wisconsin, Legreid and Ward (1982:14) found that Norwegians on the whole came too late to acquire the most desirable lots of land in three valleys bordering Trempealeau and

Jackson counties, as long-term residents had obtained these already by the 1850s through the Graduation Act. Norwegians took tracts of land primarily through homesteading in the 1870s and 1880s, claiming land that had been wrest from Native Americans in most cases and made available to white migrants through the Homestead Act of 1862 (14). The "allotment period" of the 1870s through the 1920s included the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, which aimed to both foster a farming livelihood among American Indians as well as open up "surplus" land for Euro-American settlement.

Besides the class distinctions of landholders and non-landholding peasants in Norway, regional differences shaped how people related to one another in the United States. Peasants from valleys in eastern Norway were often relatively wealthy in comparison to their poorer counterparts from mountainous western regions (Legreid and Ward 1982:19). Deeply held *bygd* regional identities among Norwegians contributed to divisions among Norwegian-Americans, as migrants initially did not marry outside their *bygd* and dialect variations in Norwegian became regnant of social differences between *bygd* (Legreid and Ward 1982:13; Haugen 1969 [1953]:338,345-349). One Norwegian-American man described to the linguist Einar Haugen (1969 [1953]:337) that when in Norway, "*berre du krossa ein bekk, så va de eit anna språk* (every time you crossed a creek, there was a new language)." Haugen (1969:338) argues that if one uses the township district (*herred*) in Norway as a measure, with which the *bygd* is comparable, at least 720 distinct dialects of Norwegian may be observed at the time of immigration to the United States. Besides the social evaluation of the dialects, Haugen (1969[1953]:355-356) found that most Norwegian-speaking American informants in his study indicated, when asked, that the Norwegian *boksproget* (or the book language) "sounded much

nicer" (*lyes mye penere*) than their own dialect.[25] The Norwegian educated upper class spoke the market dialect of *boksproget,* which was also affiliated with the written text of the Bible.

In Norway, state church pastors had formed members of this small, elite class called the *Embedsmænd* or "officials of the crown," which included intellectuals and such professionals as judges, engineers, architects, and lawyers (Munch 1980:4).[26] Their status derived from the "culture" or "polish" (*dannelse*) that they demonstrated rather than from their inheritance (5). Besides speaking a marked dialect of Norwegian, the *Embedsmænd* received a high level of education and wore clothes that distinguished them from the majority population (Munch 1980:12; Haugen 1969:155,356). In the United States, recent immigrants that formed the Norwegian Synod of America in 1853 frequently requested Norwegian Lutheran pastors for their churches, for which there had been a shortage, since the pastor would provide status and legitimacy to the congregation (Munch 1980:12,21). After immigration, however, Norwegian Lutheran pastors changed their attire. They typically no longer dressed in the cassock that had been mandatory in Norway. One letter-writer cited by Munch (1980:11) noted that the cassock highlighted status differences between the laity and the clergy in Norway that no longer existed in the United States.

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[25] Haugen conducted the research for his study of Norwegian bilingualism in the United States in periods beginning in 1936 and stretching to 1948 (ix). His research drew conclusions from interviews and survey research with 253 informants, who ranged from elderly Norwegian immigrants to American-born children of immigrants (618-635). The research spanned those living in a variety of Midwest regions, including southern, western, and eastern Wisconsin; eastern Iowa; southern and northern Minnesota; South Dakota; North Dakota; and the cities of Sioux City, Iowa and Madison, Wisconsin (606-615).

[26] Munch (1980:5,31n6) indicates that a staggering 85 percent of the Norwegian population in the period between 1815 and 1855 were peasants (*Bønder*), in contrast to the 15 percent that comprised the *Embedsmænd* and other elites. The Norwegian population was only 907,000 in 1815 but had reached 1,479,000 by 1855 (31).

As one might assume, this writer took a rather hopeful position, since other Norwegians attacked the former state-church pastors as bearers of "papism" and "dead ritualism," and perhaps more implicit reminders of "a past of inequalities" (Munch 1980:21-22). Munch (1980) argues that the religious practice of Norwegian immigrants displayed the tension within Lutheran polity between the polar opposites of authority and freedom. As noted earlier, Hauge preached "occupational emancipation" to the landless beginning in 1796 after his personal spiritual awakening, thereby building upon the rhetoric of the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789. For many Norwegian peasants, the promise of freedom in the United States involved voluntary membership and lay oversight in religious organizations that had not been possible in Norway (Munch 1980:10; Gjerde 1986:691; Gjerde 1997:115-117). At the same time, Lutheran pastors, who were considered "spiritual advisors" (*Sjælesørgere*, "caretaker of the souls") held great authority in "churchly affairs," sanctioned by the congregations, and attempted to bring order to the laity through precise interpretations of polity, doctrine, and ritual that confirmed their pastoral power (or spiritual authority, Norwegian, *geistlig Øvrighed*) in such matters (Munch 1980:14,16).

Great variation existed in the forms of Lutheranism that Norwegian migrants practiced in the Midwest, from so-called low-church varieties of Haugeanism and Eielsenianism to the orthodox Lutheranism sanctioned by the Norwegian state church (Legreid and Ward 1982:13; Munch 1980:15). Through their research, several historians of Norwegian immigration to the United States have made the case that the "immigrant church," often regarded in American historiography as a source of social cohesion, forms the basis just as equally for conflict (Munch 1980; Legreid and Ward 1982; Gjerde 1986,

1997). In a study of nineteenth-century Swedish immigration to the Upper Midwest, Ostergren (1988) writes:

> Swedish Lutheranism in America was not plagued with bitter schismatic battles on the scale experienced among other Lutheran immigrant groups. The Norwegians, in particular, gained a reputation for their doctrinal disputes, which were often so bitterly fought as to split communities and even families (213).

Indeed, the formation of the "high church" Norwegian Synod of America responded to the competition posed by the flourishing lay leadership of the Eielsen Synod, organized in 1846 under the direction of the pietist Elling Eielsen, and the Hauge Synod, founded in 1876. These pietist movements challenged the Lutheran orthodoxy of the state church, as it was represented by the Norwegian Synod. Three synods formed in 1870 to mark the "middle way" between the pietism of the Hauge and Eielsen synods and the high-church Norwegian Synod: Norwegian Augustana Synod, Scandinavian Augustana Synod, and Norwegian-Danish Conference. In 1890, the Augustana Synod, Norwegian-Danish Conference, and the Anti-Missourians (a group that split in 1887-88 from the Norwegian Synod over an election controversy) merged to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church. By 1900, at least 14 different synods existed among Norwegian Lutherans (Legreid and Ward 1982:15). This period of fissure continued until 1917, when the Norwegian Synod, Hauge Synod, and the United Church formed the unified Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (NLCA). (See Figure 1.1 for a graphic representation of these relationships)

In addition to the social differences among early Norwegian-Americans, a series of doctrinal debates propelled the process of schism and reunification. One controversy revolved around the official neutrality of the newly formed Norwegian Synod during the Civil War. The Norwegian Synod pastors frequently shared the positions of German-

American Missouri Synod clergy, since they had been trained at the well-established Concordia Seminary of the Missouri Synod into the 1860s (Gjerde 1986:689). When the laity realized in 1861 that the clergy had "offered theological justifications for slavery," many opposed the majority of the clergy who took a stand of neutrality and some congregations seceded from the Norwegian Synod (689).

The even greater divide within the Norwegian Synod arose through a debate in the 1880s over the meaning of predestination in Lutheran practice. The position of the Missouri Synod asserted that predestination derived from God's grace alone, which its detractors alleged was a form of Calvinism. The other primary view of the Anti-Missourians, drawn from the theology of the Norwegian state church, contended that faith produced election, thereby giving believers a more prominent part in their own salvation (Gjerde 1997:118-119). By the end of the 1880s, many clergy and congregations left the Norwegian Synod over the controversy in order to join the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, nearly one-third of its membership in all (119).

Distinctions between Haugeans and Norwegian Synod members, as well as all doctrinal variations in between, persisted among Norwegian-Americans. Just five years after the formation of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1890, Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal formed the "Friends of Augsburg" in Minneapolis to oppose the Church's plan to control the Augsburg Seminary, which had been moved there from Marshall, Wisconsin in 1872. Underlying the struggle over control of the Seminary were differing views regarding how the clergy should be trained. Originally members of the Conference for the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, which had identified Augsburg as its seminary, Sverdrup and Oftedal believed that pastors should be

trained in the theology of the free church, which gave individual congregations ultimate control over the church body and the ability to reject its non-binding resolutions. While they valued theological education for the clergy, Sverdrup and Oftedal argued that this knowledge only came alive through the distinct and personal influence of the Holy Spirit (Dyrud 2000:13). In 1897, twelve congregations that supported the position of the "Friends" were forced to leave the United Church. Later that year, Sverdrup and Oftedal organized the Lutheran Free Church as an independent and congregationalist church, which placed emphasis on the sharing of the gifts of the Spirit and the spiritual bonds (rather than constitutional ones) that held together the church members.

One Madagascar missionary, Rose, a long-term nurse in the southwest and the capital, told me that she associated her Norwegian maternal grandmother, who lived in western Minnesota, with Haugean pietism. "She wouldn't let us pick up a needle on Sundays. It was a strict background in a sense but then very loving and warm and free." Rose's father was Roman Catholic, from a German-American logging family, and her mother's parents required her father to convert to Lutheranism before they gave the couple permission to marry. Rose remembers her father teaching her to waltz, playing clarinet, and "dancing around the table" at home, things prohibited by strict Haugeans and lingering images for her of his ethnic-religious difference. Rose pointed out how unusual her father's background was in comparison to her husband's family and most American Lutheran missionaries in Madagascar. Rose married Norman, a third-generation Norwegian-American missionary, whose family had been well-known, long-time members of the Lutheran Free Church (LFC). A small church in comparison to the

larger Evangelical Lutheran Church, the now-dissolved LFC is recalled as the more pietistic of the two and the one that remained closest to the ideals of Hauge.

The Norwegian theologian Georg Sverdrup, who was born in Balestrand, Sogn, on December 16, 1848, organized the Lutheran Free Church with Oftedal around a theological emphasis on lay leadership and a decentralized polity, in direct contrast to the Norwegian state church -- or at least to how it came to be recognized in the late nineteenth-century United States (Dyrud 2000:29-30; Olsen 2004:261). As I discuss further below, the Lutheran Free Church began the first American Lutheran mission to Madagascar in 1888 and continued its involvement in the southwest part of the island into the twentieth century. The Lutheran Free Church officially became part of the American Lutheran Church in 1963. Although the relationship between missionaries of the Lutheran Free Church and Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (which became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1946) was primarily cooperative, some tensions remained among them in Madagascar. These conflicts, which continue to this day, stem largely from differing views on the doctrinal issues around which Sverdrup and Oftedal formed the Lutheran Free Church. People I spoke with in Minnesota quickly recalled not only their families' affiliation prior to 1963 with one church or the other but also that of their coworkers.

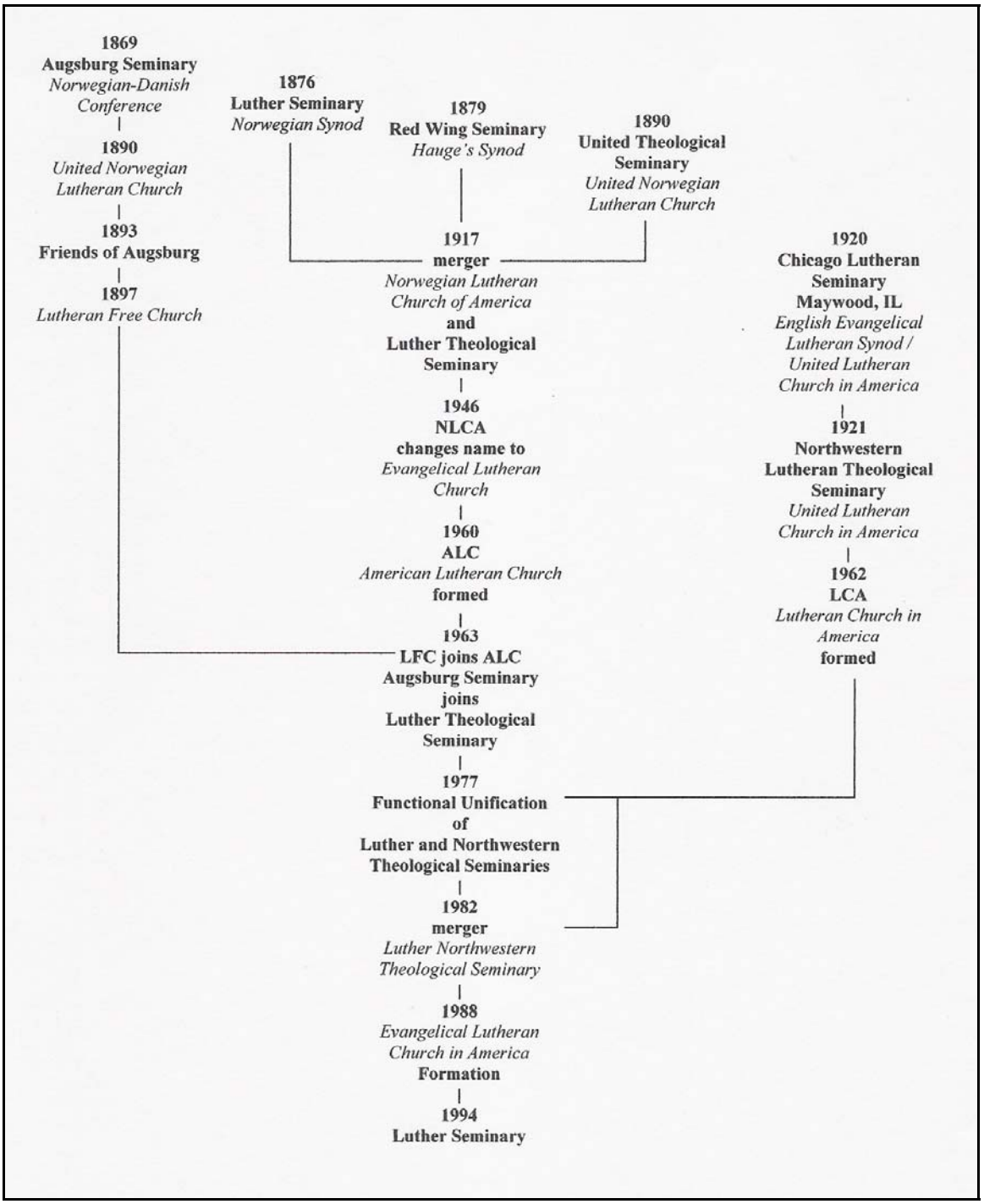

Figure 1.1. This diagram provides a selective genealogy of Norwegian Lutheran churches in the United States, including their respective seminaries. Reprinted by permission of the ELCA Region 3 Archives, St. Paul, Minnesota.

The "Malagasy Martyrs" and Church-State Relations in Madagascar

Norwegian immigrants to the United States left Norway at a time when the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS), jointly founded by state clergy and independent Moravians and Haugeans in 1842, was organizing its first religious missions to South Africa and Madagascar with a high degree of popular support (Skeie 1999). The mission movement in Norway built upon newly reinstated religious freedoms in the country in 1842 when the government rescinded the 1741 Conventicle Ordinance, which legally prohibited lay preaching and prayer meetings. Following 1842, the newly organized NMS built support for its missions program through popular missions periodicals, such as *Norsk Missionstidende*. This publication alone had 10,000 readers in a population of 1.9 million in 1885, making it more widely circulated than any newspaper in the country (Skeie 1999:76n21). Despite the financial backing of Norway's emerging middle class, the first mission of the NMS to Zululand-Natal had been largely unsuccessful in its early years. The organization searched for a second destination that could be reached by sea, since it had built its own ocean-faring vessel to transport missionaries, the ship *Paulus* (Skeie 1999).

Madagascar was familiar to many Norwegians, who had read widely published accounts of the persecution of Malagasy Christians from 1835 to 1861 under the reign of Merina Queen Ranavalona I (Skeie 1999). More general Norwegian interest in Madagascar may be linked to the earlier Norwegian involvement in the slave trade and piracy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Nyhagen Predelli 2003:17). While Islam was introduced as early as the twelfth century C.E. and Christian missions to Madagascar began on the whole in the sixteenth century, Protestant involvement started

predominantly in the early nineteenth century. The London Missionary Society had sent missionaries to Madagascar in 1817 at the invitation of the king of the Merina empire, Radama I. The Merina king was strategically making an external Anglo-Merina alliance to weaken the political power of the remaining Malagasy elite *namana* (Malagasy, friends) within his court (Larson 2000:222-230). Protestantism was important for this alliance because, as a text-based religion, the king and his "immediate circle" perceived it to be one way to gain greater access to knowledge through the written word (Raison-Jourde 1995:292). By having British missionaries teach reading and writing to a select group chosen by the king, the king's supporters could issue written communications to foreign governments and collect reports from other parts of the island under Merina rule (Raison-Jourde 1995:292).

Radama's successor, Queen Ranavalona I, forced these missionaries to leave Madagascar in 1835, however, in an effort to mitigate the increasing incursion of Westerners on the island, especially those of French and English diplomats, traders, merchants, and missionaries (Covell 1995:149; Raison-Jourde 1995:292). Following the beginning of Ranavalona I's reign in 1828, she struggled to prevent the expansion of missionary involvement on the island and finally deemed Christianity illegal in 1835, banning the conferral of the sacraments and public religious meetings (Feeley-Harnik 2001:42). (See Ranavalona I's edict in Appendix 1) The written accounts of her reign, which Norwegians read as the mission movement there gained national prominence, largely stemmed from London Missionary Society involvement in Madagascar (Nyhagen Predelli 2003:17; Feeley-Harnik 2001:42).

After the death of Queen Ranavalona I in August 1861, missionaries returned to the island in greater numbers than before. As many retired missionaries tell the story today, Ranavalona I's reign only forced the Christian church "underground" in Madagascar and it grew in size from one thousand to more than seven thousand adherents during the worst years of persecution (see Burgess 1932:118). Before they left the island in July 1836 for Mauritius, missionaries David Johns and Edward Baker of the London Missionary Society buried in the soil about seventy recently translated Bibles as well as psalters, testaments, spelling and hymn books, catechisms, and tracts (Smith 1987:68; cf. Feeley-Harnik 2001:44). One of the most famous and well-known missionary accounts of this period is written by T.T. Matthews, who was sent to Madagascar by the London Missionary Society in 1870. In his book *Thirty Years in Madagascar,* he described the influence of Ranavalona's reign on the Christian church:

> Her cruelties did service to the cause of Christ in other lands besides Madagascar; for it was by the light of those martyr fires, which she in her cruelty had kindled, that thousands in this and other lands saw Madagascar, and were roused to take interest in the island and in Christian missions. Thus once more did God make the wrath of man to praise Him (1904:43).

The storyline of the Malagasy martyrs relies upon and contains echoes of the martyrdom of the early Christians and subsequent martyrs, suggested by Matthews (1904) through the words "once more" in the passage cited above. Through this historical interweaving, writers actively produced the martyr status of the early Malagasy Christians. By constructing the memory of the early Christian martyrs, they reinforced the idea that no martyr, by definition, dies in vain, since the Bible always "bears fruit" (cf. Castelli 2004). In line with this understanding, the so-called Malagasy martyrs – the thousands who were executed, enslaved, and punished for their Christian faith during Queen Ranavalona I's

reign – have been the subject of extensive apotheosis in missionary circles. For example, the martyrs foreshadow the development of the Christian church in Madagascar in most American Lutheran mission histories (see, e.g., Ditmanson 1927:50-52; Burgess 1954:80; Braaten 2006:55).

During my fieldwork, Lynn, a former medical missionary and the founder of a medical aid association for the Malagasy Lutheran health care system (*Sampan'asa Loterana Momba Ny Fahasalamana,* SALFA), gave all the American volunteers in his agency a copy of *Triumph in Death: The Story of the Malagasy Martyrs* (1987) by the LMS missionary E. Graeme Smith. Within the left-hand front cover, Lynn placed a printed dedication in each copy that stated,

> This book is given in love and appreciation by SALFA and Malagasy Partnership. It is our prayer that it will give you a clear picture of the good work started at great cost many years ago and being carried out by you now in partnership with your coworkers in Madagascar. Misaotra betsaka! [Malagasy, thanks a lot/thank you very much].

Lynn's dedication positioned the aid workers within the genealogy of faith that stemmed from the death of the mid-nineteenth century Malagasy martyrs. The concluding Malagasy words framed the dedication with a thank-you that evoked a Malagasy voice, placing the American aid workers in direct conversation with their contemporary Malagasy coworkers or possibly with the Malagasy martyrs. Martyrs constitute "tangible links between heaven and earth" and make a place sacred in relation to their activities (Sheldrake 2001:38). By constructing their martyrdom, subsequent people, like American aid workers, experience and participate in the sacramental qualities of their sacrifice (37-38). The dedication plate reinforced the aid workers' participation in the work begun by the Malagasy martyrs, but placed it within a more generally defined "good work" of faith

leading to the second coming of Christ. In a smaller, different typeface above the dedication were the words of Philippians 1:3-6: "…He who began a good work in you will carry it out to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Due to the circulation through Europe of written accounts of the Malagasy martyrs, the Norwegian Missionary Society was not the only new missionary presence in Madagascar following the end of Queen Ranavalona's reign. In addition to the arrival of Norwegian Lutherans in 1866, French Catholic missions began in 1861 in Antananarivo and moved then to Fianarantsoa and along the coasts, though the Catholic Church had been involved on Ile Sainte-Marie and Nosy Be (Kaufmann 2002:489; Covell 1995:149-50). The Church Missionary Society began a mission in 1864 on the east coast, which ended in 1874. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (Anglican) arrived on the east coast in 1864 and in the capital city in 1867 and continued to work on the island for years. The French Evangelical Society came to Madagascar in 1897. Additionally, Quakers, known in Madagascar as the Friends' Foreign Missionary Association, established a Malagasy church in 1867 (Brown 2000:187-188).

In February 1869, Protestant Christianity became a "state religion" with the conversion and baptism of the ruling Ranavalona II and her court (Nyhagen Predelli 2003:21). The endorsement strategically aligned the Merina state with the British Protestants of the LMS and other international societies in light of increasing attempts to annex Madagascar by the French Catholic state.[27] The royal court conversion to Protestant Christianity also may have been due to the role that mission schools played as sources of *fanompoana* labor for the state (Campbell 2005:74; Covell 1987:16). Members of the Merina court enlisted state-church missionaries in northern Betsileo as supervisors

[27] The full separation of church and state in France occurred in 1905.

for work units and required mission school pupils – male and female teens and older, and sometimes children – to labor in the island's goldfields beginning in the mid-1880s.

The Merina state increasingly exacted *fanompoana*, or unremunerated forced labor, throughout the population between 1877 and 1895. [28] The demand for *fanompoana* increased in part because of the slave emancipation measure of June 1877, which rendered "free" all African slaves brought to Madagascar since 1865 and subsequently made labor more expensive. Additionally, the state began at this time to extensively exploit the country's goldfields, a move to restore the state's depleted resources after the Franco-Merina War of 1883-1885 (Campbell 2005:73-75). With the arrival in Madagascar of numerous Protestant mission societies in the same decade, the state endorsement heightened competition between Catholic and Protestant missionaries on the island from the 1860s through French colonial occupation beginning in 1896 (Feeley-Harnik 2001:58). In all, four orders of the Catholic Church had been active throughout the island: the Salette, Holy Brethren, Jesuits, and Lazarists, the latter of which worked primarily in the southeast surrounding Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro.[29]

"Healing the Wounds": Norwegian Nationalism and Evangelism in Madagascar

Madagascar became the first official "mission field" for American Lutheran missionaries of two primary (Norwegian) Lutheran church bodies, the Lutheran Free

[28] Drawing upon the definition provided by the LMS missionary J. Houlder, Campbell (2005:70) describes *fanompoana* as "(1) unpaid labor exacted in lieu of tax; (2) unrequited compulsory service rendered to a superior; and (3) the service of a slave to a master." He notes that *fanompoana*, originally based on the "principle of prestations to the sovereign," formed part of a wider system of caste hierarchy in which people continually paid tribute and service, involving labor, money, and property, to their superiors (71).
[29] Early American Lutheran missionaries disputed the membership of the Catholic Church in the southeast, claiming that the methods for counting church members by district exaggerated the total beyond those actually involved in the church (see Burgess 1932:159). At the time of his writing, Burgess (1932) noted that there were 170 priests, 234 nuns, and 430,000 members of the Catholic Church in Madagascar.

Church (LFC) and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (UNLC).[30] In 1873, the Conference for the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church dispatched representatives to Stavanger, Norway, in order to meet with the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS). The Conference, which preceded the Lutheran Free Church, had given financial support to the NMS but wanted to send its own missionaries to Madagascar (Olsen 2004:64-65).[31] Besides viewing mission work as a central and necessary part of the Christian faith, Georg Sverdrup made the case for American involvement in Madagascar by arguing that the pursuit of foreign missions could serve as a conjoining activity for Norwegian-Americans, known for their divisive doctrinal disputes. The Lutheran Free Church foreign mission secretary Andreas Helland later wrote that Sverdrup conveyed this argument in

> … two editorials published in 1878, in which he pleaded for participation in the work of the Norwegian Mission Society on the grounds that it would help to bring the Norwegian Lutherans in America more closely together in a common endeavor and a mutual love, and thus aid in healing the wounds caused by the frequent church controversies (Helland 1949 cited in Olsen 2004:248).

From the beginning, the mission was constructed as a shared endeavor that could promote harmony and unity, healing the class, regional, and doctrinal divides among Norwegian Americans. Moreover, in this light, it is little wonder that the church mission boards often used a term of intimacy, enduring connection, and cooperation to portray the relations among their missionaries in Madagascar. The characterization of the collective

[30] The Lutheran Free Church was initially known as the "Friends of Augsburg" after the college affiliation of the initial founders in Minnesota. The United Norwegian Lutheran Church merged into the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in 1917 with two other Norwegian Lutheran synods. Predominantly German, Norwegian and Danish Lutheran synods merged into the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1960, and the Lutheran Free Church joined the ALC in 1963. In 1962, one group split from the Lutheran Free Church as it voted to join the ALC; this group became known as the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) and exists through the present day as a separate Lutheran church organization.

[31] Ditmanson (1927:58) reports that Norwegians and Norwegian-Americans in the United States donated $2,536.68 to the Norwegian Missionary Society in 1886 and $3,403.50 in 1887 under the direction of Georg Sverdrup.

employees of the mission as a "missionary family" continues to shape relations among missionaries and their descendants, as I discuss more in Chapter 3.

With the support of the NMS, the Rev. Johan P. Hogstad, who was born in Inherred, Norway and immigrated to the United States in 1866, arrived in Madagascar in 1888 for the purposes of establishing a Norwegian-American Lutheran mission. During the same year, Hogstad graduated from the Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis, was ordained as a Lutheran pastor, and wed Lena Hansen, all requirements for the vocation. Although Hogstad initially traveled to Madagascar under the auspices of the Norwegian Missionary Society, he was a missionary of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (UNLC) and missionaries consider him to be the founding figure of the American mission to southern Madagascar.[32] (See Figure 1.2) It is noteworthy that Hogstad's wife is largely absent or receives brief recognition through their marital connection in these contemporary remembrances. If the missionaries constitute a family, J.P. Hogstad acts as its progenitor.

Furthermore, the fact that Hogstad was Norwegian serves to reinforce the dominant historical narrative of the American Lutheran mission to Madagascar, which characterizes it as a Norwegian-American endeavor. The NMS missionaries established their work primarily in the plateau regions of Vakinankaratra and Betsileo, while American Lutherans focused primarily upon evangelizing Tandroy and Tanosy across the southern tip of the island below the Tropic of Capricorn. The Norwegians formally transferred responsibility to the Americans for the southern "mission field" in 1892. But Norwegian and American Lutherans continued to be involved in the Inter-Lutheran

[32] Hogstad became a Lutheran Free Church missionary in 1894, but later rejoined the United Norwegian Lutheran Church mission in 1905 (Burgess 1932:156).

Conference, which began in 1924, and with mutually run institutions, such as the Lutheran seminary in Ivory near Fianarantsoa. Since the "Friends of Augsburg" split from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (UNLC) in 1897 to form the Lutheran Free Church, two separate mission fields eventually developed by 1904 in southern Madagascar, with the LFC in the southwest and the UNLC in the southeast (Burgess 1932:154).

While I was living in Minneapolis for my fieldwork, I heard one story that underscored the strong ties in Madagascar that continued to exist between Norwegian ethnic nationalism and Lutheranism, as both American missionaries and Malagasy Lutherans perceived it. During a celebratory picnic for volunteers and supporters of Malagasy Partnership, the non-profit organization that sends medical relief to Madagascar, the conversation turned suddenly to the volunteers' travel stories. Two occasional volunteers from Lynn's church, whom I did not know at the time, took turns telling a story that bore the timing and coordination of a tale told before. Sally's husband Mitch narrated in a bemused tone the story of his wife's foibles when talking to an immigration officer at Heathrow Airport in London during a previous vacation. The immigration officer asked Sally to identify her nationality. She told the officer, after handing him her U.S. passport, that she was Norwegian. "Well," Sally interjected at the picnic in her defense, "I had always been told I was Norwegian, so it seemed like the appropriate answer!" Sally explained that relatives of her grandparents' generation came to the Upper Midwest from Norway.

Through his body positioning and the slight turn of his head, Mitch appeared to be narrating this story specifically for Emmanuel, a Malagasy Lutheran pastor from the

central highlands who now lives in Minneapolis. Emmanuel, sitting across the table, had been talking about travel outside the U.S. with me just a few moments earlier. In response to Mitch, he told everyone at the picnic table that in Madagascar until 20 or 30 years ago, people who were Lutheran did not describe themselves as such when asked about their religious affiliation but instead identified themselves as "Norwegian" in conversation. The Lutheran faith had been so closely identified, Emmanuel explained, with being Norwegian, with Norway, and with the NMS mission. This term of affiliation interestingly comments upon the proximity and influence of Norwegian missionaries, of American Lutheran missionaries' continuation of specifically *Norwegian* Lutheran mission work, and of the many social practices connected with "being Norwegian" that were inseparable from the Lutheran faith as it was initially practiced and understood in southern Madagascar.

Figure 1.2. Hank shows me the grave of J.P. Hogstad (d. 1911) in the American Lutheran cemetery in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro.

Figure 1.3. The book *Zanahary in South Madagascar* by Andrew Burgess, published in 1932, features this map on page 31, which imagines the size of Madagascar through the middle section of the United States. Burgess' book constituted part of a surge in English language mission publishing within the church in the 1930s, just as Norwegian ceased to be a primary language in business and local media. This image illustrates the wider process of making Madagascar, particularly the more detailed southern region, visible to Midwestern churchgoers, a project that missionaries and church officials effected through their books, letters, presentations, and photographs. Reprinted by permission of the ELCA Region 3 Archives, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Through their involvement in Madagascar, American Lutheran churches engaged in two simultaneous projects. They attempted to educate and unite churchgoers in the United States through the cooperative mission effort while also imagining missionaries as a unified Norwegian-American workforce. From the beginning of the mission to Madagascar, the church embarked upon an extensive campaign to make the American Lutheran reading public aware of Madagascar and to raise its "mission consciousness" more generally (Olsen 2004:257). In fact, by 1900, only 12 years after the first

missionary arrived in Madagascar, the yearly report of the Lutheran Free Church complained that laypeople needed to become more mission conscious at home (257).[33] In response, the church began a devotional newspaper in 1900 called *Gasseren* (Norwegian, The Malagasy), and the annual conference urged Lutheran pastors to incorporate references to the mission more integrally in their sermons and congregational activities (258).

In southern Madagascar, American missionaries of different regional origin in Norway, sectarian backgrounds, and chains of migration were brought together in ecumenical cooperation. The mission to Madagascar reinfused life to the ecumenical effort of American Lutherans and reconstituted ties with Norwegian Lutherans working further north in the highlands. But Norwegian-American missionaries in late nineteenth-century Madagascar may have found common ground among themselves and their Norwegian coreligionists for another reason. As the early American Lutheran mission formed and found support in the Upper Midwest, Norwegian immigrants and their children participated in the development of a pan-Norwegian ethnic nationalism that gradually took precedence over social differences that derived from their Norwegian region and country district of origin (*bygd*).

Scandinavian cultural practices find close association today with the history of Minnesota and the immediately surrounding region of the Upper Midwest. But among Scandinavians, Norwegians were the largest population per capita to immigrate to the

[33] This complaint could have been because of a decrease in the monetary contributions to the mission effort in 1899-1900. Church records indicate that a notable $10,462.60 was given to the Lutheran Free Church mission to Madagascar in 1898-1899, but that the amount decreased to $7,892.13 in 1899-1900. Following the surge in mission publishing and other efforts to increase "mission consciousness," the amount increased to $12,345.23 in 1900-1901 and, by 1903, it remained steady and then increased again substantially in 1918 after the close of World War I (Ditmanson 1927:74-75).

Midwest. Regional affiliations played a greater role in organizing social relations among early Norwegian migrants than national identity. Beginning in the 1880s, however, Norwegian nationalism took public expressions in the Midwest, which reinforced strategic ties to the Norwegian state. Most Norwegians had left Norway at a time when it was not an independent state. Norway was under Swedish rule from 1814 to 1905, when it established its full independence. Prior to 1814, Denmark governed present-day Norway, with Copenhagen as the capital of the Denmark-Norway territory.

The recreation of distinctly "Norwegian" traditions in Minnesota and the surrounding region was made especially important in relation to those from more regionally dominant Scandinavian nation-states, such as Sweden and Denmark. Mauk (2002:32) describes "increasingly public expressions" of Norwegian nationalism between 1869 and 1914 in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Beginning in the late 1880s, the Norwegian Constitution Day (*syttende mai*, or 17 May) played a crucial role in promoting national ethnic solidarity. In Minneapolis, where Swedish and Norwegian immigrants and their children comprised nearly half of the population in 1900, Norwegian-American elites promoted Norwegian nationalism and shared homeland culture (*norskdom*) through the placement of numerous public monuments in the city. For example, the Norwegian sculptor Jacob Fjelde created a statue of Ole Bull, the Norwegian violinist and staunch nationalist, which was placed near downtown Minneapolis in Loring Park for *syttende mai* 1897, while a bust of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen was dedicated in St. Paul's Como Park in 1912. Moreover, in 1908, a monument to the poet Henrik Wergeland was placed in Minneapolis during a visit from Norway's Minister to the United States (Mauk 2002). The ethnic dominance that Norwegian Americans once

constructed through public spectacle in the Upper Midwest, the "capital of Norwegian America," has changed in some crucial respects through late twentieth century patterns of immigration to the United States. Nonetheless, it was always an imagining, from a specific perspective, of the surrounding region and the city of Minneapolis/St. Paul, since the area was characterized by ethnic and religious diversity from its beginnings (Green 2007; Wingerd 2001; Valdés 2000; Joe 1994).

The romantic nationalism in Norway in the mid-late nineteenth century increasingly identified bourgeois Norwegianness with the peasantry (see Frykman and Löfgren 1987 for a comparable process in Sweden). This occurred as many peasants abandoned agrarian livelihoods in order to make a living in the country's growing urban industries or in the United States. The Norwegian pietistic movement that was associated with Hans Nielson Hauge arose alongside the profound economic and social changes happening throughout nineteenth-century Norway (Gjerde and Qualey 2002:2). As Haugeans and other Norwegians participated in a dual reform of their livelihood and of their inner life, their social mobility and migration enabled them to participate in a wider bourgeois nostalgia for the primarily rural livelihoods and customs of the Norwegian peasantry that many had left behind.[34] These nostalgic recollections masked the vast social divisions of Norway's eighteenth-century peasantry and reconstructed particular practices as icons of a shared and classless ethnonational past.

[34] Norwegian Americans in the Upper Midwest participated directly in the creation of the fully independent Norwegian nation-state. A founding member of the Lutheran Free Church in Minneapolis, Georg Sverdrup came from a prominent Norwegian family. His great uncle participated in leading the Eidsvoll assembly that wrote Norway's constitution in 1814 while his uncle served in the first parliamentary government of Norway in 1884 (Mauk 2002:39). Pro-Independence Liberal Party members in Norway corresponded with prominent Norwegian Americans like Lars Oftedal and Sverdrup, who formed the Norwegian-American Liberal Society and sent money to the Liberal Party in Norway (Mauk 2002:39; Dyrud 2000:29). In some of their meetings, Sverdrup and Oftedal even "talked publicly of raising more funds to send rifles for use in the liberation of the homeland" (Mauk 2002:39).

Missionaries today implicitly evoke class differences among Norwegian-Americans, without directly doing so, when they highlight the importance of the Haugean movement in the present religious landscape. They also celebrate, with a kind of bourgeois nostalgia, the peasant origins of many Norwegian Americans, a practice central to the organization of Norwegian ethnicity in the United States *after* immigration from Norway. Moreover, they enliven the distinctions among Lutheran sects that were central impetuses for migration in the first place and argue for their relevance in contemporary doctrinal and social disputes, a subject I address more in Chapter 4.

Madagascar exists in these remembrances partly as a place memory of Norwegian-American unity in the face of Norwegian regional, sectarian, and class divisions. Interestingly, by suggesting the Haugean movement is a shared point of origin for the reunion attendants, the professor who gave the retreat presentation and others muted the possibility that some of them descend from Norwegian state church pastors or other Norwegian elites that may have opposed the lay religiosity of the Haugeans. Instead, reunion participants largely constructed the Haugean movement as a locus for the shared pursuit of the mission movement and for the affirmation of Norwegian ethnonational identity.

Conclusion

Within this chapter, my aim has been to examine how former American Lutheran missionaries and their families actively theorize and locate themselves in place, a pursuit that selectively incorporates certain oral and written texts and iconic cultural and religious figures. In their ethnography of Primitive Baptists living in the North Carolina and Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains, Peacock and Tyson (1989:88) argue that “doctrine

stipulates the status of history" and cannot be separated from an examination of how believers locate themselves in the world as historical actors. They write,

> The point is that these 'historical' events live on in the memories and practices of Evans and other Primitive Baptists. Nor is their concern with history antiquarian; it is … directed, too, at contemporary controversies in which elders avidly participate (Peacock and Tyson 1989: 33).

In Chapter 4, I further explore the "contemporary controversies" that inter-animate missionaries' research on the *fifohazana* movement of Madagascar. But we might first extend Peacock and Tyson's observation to the written research projects and oral stories of former Madagascar missionaries that I have recounted in this chapter, which construct displacement as a way of dwelling or being in place. This is not the displacement of forced migration or involuntary population movement. Rather, it is a theory of evangelism and spiritual renewal that imagines voluntary, or divinely commanded, movement and migration as a source and synecdoche of Christian social relations. Migration and displacement became the missionaries' way of life but simultaneously served the dual purpose – through their stories and extensive written mediation – of being a symbol to themselves and to their fellow churchgoers of spiritual renewal. My research among Madagascar missionaries raises questions that comparative research could illuminate further: In what ways are former and current missionaries in many world regions engaged in a creative process that selectively makes sites of evangelism into sacred places? How does this process affect the unfolding interconnection of world regions that constitute "global Christianity" as believers know and imagine it?

American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar promoted certain stories of unity and renewal through migration for years, which served to represent and imagine the church as a collective. Within their stories, certain figures continually receive prominent

mention: Hans Nielson Hauge, Georg Sverdrup, Merina Queen Ranavalona I, and J.P. Hogstad. For strangers and non-intimates, this list may appear to be a rather odd and piecemeal assemblage of historical figures. Yet because of their particular role within these stories, on the cusp of spiritual renewal or provoking it as a catalyst, these figures serve as icons for the larger process of spiritual bifurcation: being in the Word and in the world. They illuminate points of transition, transformation, and movement as sources of spiritual renewal in this overarching story of displacement and migration. In many respects, the evangelizing Christian faith is precisely about the construction of a kind of diaspora, or of dispensing the Gospel message forward through time and space. Safran (2004) interestingly points out that it is the Gospel message that is the object of dissemination and dispersal, carried through travelers and their social relations, but ultimately detachable from them.

Missionaries construct migration as spiritual renewal, a form of inalienable "heritage," in the face of several historical movements: their ancestors' displacement from land in Norway and their own obedience to the divine call that prompted them to leave behind farming land and their family in the Midwest. Many missionaries came from Norwegian-American families where their inability to obtain arable farm land served as the impetus for their migration from Norway to the United States in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, some lifelong foreign missionaries in my research, who were born in the 1920s and 1930s, constitute only the first or second U.S.-born generation in their families. Although many contemporary lifelong missionaries grew up in Midwestern farming families, they left behind the farming livelihood through their spiritual call to mission work. (See Appendix II on the parental occupation of missionaries in my

research) In several cases, their calling coincided with other social obstacles that would have prevented them from taking over the family farm, such as gender, birth order, or the farm's lack of sustained economic viability. Their emphasis on moveable forms of heritage and wealth, I suggest, derives and gain its significance partly from the social process of uprooting and migration that they have participated in for several generations – as Norwegian immigrants, non-inheriting farm children, and missionaries.

Even if one is not of self-identified Norwegian descent, he or she participates in an endeavor that is indelibly tied to Norwegian nationalism. Though Norwegian Americans partly financed the mission work of the Norwegian Missionary Society in the central highlands of Madagascar, they made the case for their own mission work on the island in the late nineteenth century by arguing that the endeavor might help to unite Norwegian-American Lutherans, known for their disputes over doctrine. Through sending missionaries to Madagascar, Norwegian-American Lutherans envisioned themselves as a united church and a national people.

Within the Midwest U.S., Minneapolis/St. Paul became the cultural center or "capital" of Norwegian America. Ethnonational festivals reinforced this symbolic geography. For example, the 1914 *syttende mai* celebration included 25,000 to 30,000 out of town visitors from the surrounding Norwegian American "hinterlands" of five neighboring states (Mauk 2002:49). These interconnected regional circuits of small towns and farm communities underwrote the fundraising for Norwegian ethnonational endeavors, including the American Lutheran mission to Madagascar. Missionaries avidly traveled these circuits while on leave from the mission field and their letters and written

publications bound their reading audience together, even though they remained geographically dispersed.

In the following chapter, I explore how missionaries engage the lived theology of displacement in their everyday lives in Minneapolis/St. Paul, as well as how they pass on this legacy to their children and grandchildren. Through an examination of silver bracelets that many wear on a daily basis, I show how the bracelet form carries with it a micro-history of the American Lutheran mission in southern Madagascar. The social relations called forth through the bracelets complicate the more global Christian themes of family and faith *in* displacement that many missionaries teach to their kin relations when they give the bracelets as gifts.

CHAPTER 2:
COMMEMORATING FAITH: SILVER BRACELETS AND SOCIAL HISTORIES OF SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR

Introduction

I first met Lois, a sprightly woman in her mid-70s with short curly gray hair and seemingly boundless enthusiasm, at the three-day retreat in March 2005 for former American missionaries to Madagascar. Lois grew up in South Dakota in a Norwegian-American dairy farming family, just outside of the town where her husband-to-be Walt lived with his parents and three brothers. Lois and her husband, who passed away in 1988, raised five children in south Madagascar, where they were American Lutheran Church missionaries from 1952 to 1982. All but one of their five children went on to marry other Madagascar missionary children (though one divorced), tying Lois to three missionary couples that fill the role of her grandchildren's grandparents. At the biennial retreat, Lois chatted amicably with me, drew me to her table in the cafeteria, and coached me through the Malagasy Lutheran hymns sung every day in worship. Lois' high-pitched and loud singing rose vigorously above the melded wave of sound produced by the other attendants. Her singing, in certain respects, matched her reputation among her coworkers for tireless work in whatever she faced, dedication, and cheerfulness. In a conversation with non-missionary friends, who often entreated her to "write up [her] life story," Lois once dismissed their request in my presence by remarking that she would start to put

things down on paper when she “couldn’t move around any longer,” a time by her own estimation that would be far in the future.

Lois and her husband retired from mission work in Madagascar in 1982, mostly due to the severity of her husband’s diabetes. But since her retirement Lois has made at least six return trips to the island. She usually stops en route in Tanzania, where a daughter lives as a medical missionary with her husband and another runs a safari lodge with her spouse. One of Lois’ sons relocated permanently to southern Madagascar after a divorce and now lives in Tsiombe with his Malagasy wife and son, working as a conservationist, aid worker, and biblical translator. At the time of my fieldwork, Lois had just taken two grandchildren to Madagascar in December 2004-January 2005. Her best “investments” have been international vacations that she took with each one or a small group of her seventeen grandchildren, she explained, financed with money from her retirement annuities. I grew to know Lois mostly through her extensive volunteerism, which occupied many of her days when she was not traveling. She volunteered often at one of two Lutheran medical aid organizations in Minneapolis that sent medical relief and financial support to the Malagasy Lutheran health care system (*Sampan'asa Loterana Momba Ny Fahasalamana,* SALFA). In combination with missionary gatherings, travel, and correspondence, this was one way that Lois kept abreast of what was happening in Madagascar and maintained a close involvement with the places where she once lived.

At the missionary reunion, one of the first things I noticed about Lois were the distinctive silver bracelets that adorned her arm, clanking together as she eased into her seat in the small chapel or when she rose to sing beside me. When I later asked her about them, Lois characterized the bracelets as a “bit of life of the South” or “something of the

South." Many former missionaries and their family members in Minneapolis/St. Paul, particularly women like Lois, wear these pounded and engraved silver bracelets on their wrists, with different geometric designs etched into their surfaces. (See Figure 2.1) In the context of missionary families and their social relations in the Twin Cities, the bracelets, made primarily by a Tanosy silversmith named Rakoto and his son in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro, have become an embodied marker of missionary involvement in southern Madagascar.[35]

When I traveled to southern Madagascar with a retired missionary pastor named Hank and three of his adult children in November-December 2005, the family took with them a silver bar and an order for several silver bracelets from another son of missionaries. The man, a retired Lutheran pastor, wished to outfit the women in his family with bracelets, though they had not been missionaries themselves nor lived in Madagascar. His family's involvement with Madagascar, which stemmed from his parents' arrival on the island in 1916, had become like a family heirloom that could be passed from one generation to the next. Through conversations with my traveling companions, several of whom already had bracelets gracing their wrists, I gathered that the ordered bracelets commemorated the faith of the women's ancestors and served potentially as a marker of their own. As material forms worn on the body, the bracelets literally *witness* this faith, making it visible to others. In turn, the sight of the bracelets brings to awareness the missionary legacy and one's role in carrying it into the future.

[35] Several informants used the term "mark" to describe how the bracelets identified other missionaries, missionary children, and kin relations of missionaries with whom they came into contact in Minneapolis/St. Paul. One church archivist in the Twin Cities whom I knew commented in a slightly different manner that the bracelets marked *off* the Madagascar missionary children (or "MKs") from other students at Augsburg College, a former Lutheran Free Church school that he attended in Minneapolis. In his telling, the bracelets signaled to outsiders their lack of belonging in the relations of the Madagascar missionaries.

The bracelets give visual and material qualities to this generative element of family relations, the genealogy of faith and Christian identity, which would otherwise be invisible to strangers and non-intimates.

By examining how the bracelets communicate and commemorate the social history of the American Lutheran mission to Madagascar, this chapter asks the question: How do particular material forms come to represent a place and a past? Further, in the case of missionary evangelism, what does this present-day process tell us about missionaries' early social relationships in southern Madagascar and the role of material things in communicating the Word? I explore how missionaries actively construct and sustain their experience of displacement from southern Madagascar through the silver bracelets, portable forms that they wear and pass on to their children and grandchildren in Minnesota. The bracelets, as portable forms, accentuate the process of displacement that they call to mind for missionaries now living in Minnesota, such as Lois. Through their traces to the place and life of southern Madagascar, the bracelets serve not only as material tokens of the missionary's spiritual call to Madagascar but also of the separations that form part of one's obedience to that call.

While contemporary missionaries primarily explain the bracelets' significance through the more global Christian themes of faith and one's longing for a left-behind "home," the bracelets simultaneously must be situated within the specific social relations of the early American Lutheran missionaries in southern Madagascar. Because of their social life among Tanosy and Tandroy people in southern Madagascar, the bracelets, perhaps more than other material forms, carry with them a micro-history of the mission. As I suggest further below, the bracelets' allegorical significance may have arisen

through missionaries' attempts to secure the mission's first converts among Tanosy and Tandroy slaves and descendants of slaves. Therefore, the bracelets enable us to examine some of the ambivalence inherent in the theology of displacement: the bracelets embody the virtues of uprooting and responding actively to God's call wherever it might lead, yet they continually bear traces of the specific social relations, history, and places of southern Madagascar. Furthermore, they allow us to investigate how the prevailing contemporary understanding of the bracelets among missionaries – as a token of faith and, increasingly, of the place of the South – has been produced over time and in dialogue with Malagasy neighbors, early converts, and contemporary co-religionists.

Figure 2.1. This photograph shows Lillian Tysdal (left), a missionary teacher at the Manafiafy Girls School, and Viola Lewis (right), a missionary nurse, as they travel together to Fianarantsoa in October 1959. The silver bracelet is visible on Viola Lewis' left wrist. The photograph was included in a scrapbook created by Tysdal and the caption is in Tysdal's writing. Another retired missionary told me that she recalled people wearing the bracelets when she arrived in Madagascar in 1955. Reprinted with permission of the ELCA Region 3 Archives, St. Paul Minnesota.

Materiality, History, and Missionary Evangelism

Recent scholarship in the anthropology of Christianity has devoted considerable attention to the relationship of material value and human agency in missionary evangelism (Keane 2007; Engelke 2007; Cannell 2006). How do material things communicate the Gospel message? Do material things become word-like in the process and, if so, do people then consider them somewhat "immaterial" (see, e.g., Engelke 2007:3)? How do people selectively address the perpetual problem of icon-veneration in Protestant Christianities? And when does it become a problem in the first place? When examining missionary evangelism, studies tend to focus their exploration of these questions in two primary areas: the debates concerning fetishism and Christian subjectivity in early missionary encounters, frequently during the colonial period (e.g., Keane 2007), or the historical role of Euro-American missionaries in amassing and de-contextualizing cultural objects from a given locale as they canvas for foreign museums and personal collections (e.g., Thomas 1991:151-162).

In this chapter, I take a slightly different approach to these foundational questions and one that endeavors to unite these two somewhat disparate areas of analysis. My research presents a situation in which former missionaries and their families, now residing in Minnesota, actively narrate and historicize their involvement in southern Madagascar. What is different about this situation, in contrast to other recent studies, is that the American Lutheran missionaries in my study remember the century-long duration of the Madagascar mission partly through certain material things they've taken with them from Madagascar to Minnesota. In effect, such material things as the silver bracelets – produced by Malagasy silversmiths and taken as tokens of southern Madagascar – have been turned into historically-significant tools for renewing faith and evangelizing themselves, their kin

relations, friends, and acquaintances in Minnesota. The bracelets gain their present-day importance in Minnesota (as signs of faith) through the social history that they call forth among missionaries and their families, as well as the specific conditions of their acquisition (e.g., as leave-taking gifts from Malagasy Lutherans, purchases in southern Madagascar, or gifts from elder missionary relatives).

By examining this social history across colonial and post-colonial periods, I seek to address why the bracelets in particular, rather than other material things, have become so important for missionaries and their families. In order to try to answer this question, we must bring into view the theological issues and socio-economic conditions that animated the social relations of early American Lutheran missionaries and Malagasy Lutherans in southern Madagascar. These dimensions of the mission's social history – all but forgotten in the midst of more dominant histories circulating among missionaries and their acquaintances in Minnesota – provide clues as to how the bracelets came to be acceptable as religiously significant material forms, rather than being regarded as idolatrous, frivolous, or otherwise mis-recognized material signs. I suggest the bracelets should be seen as part of an overarching socio-historical and political process that differentiated Christianity from ancestral practices in Madagascar.

Evidence shows that Malagasy Christians and American Lutherans used the bracelets in their social relations, as well as other culturally significant material things like *lambamena* (burial cloths), as signs *of* abstract Christian principles and states of being. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I argue that this, essentially socio-historical, process is crucial for understanding how the bracelets' materiality gains its specific qualities and widespread religious value for present-day missionaries in Minnesota. I

follow the writings of the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (c.1902[1940]) and more recent scholars (e.g., Parmentier 1994; Keane 2003, 2007; Miller 2005) in exploring the recognition and formation of materiality as an historical process, organized through social convention. It is not only, then, that missionaries regard the bracelets as special things that offer a tie to southern Madagascar, faith, and the history of the mission. Perhaps even more importantly, the bracelets' have taken shape through the missionaries' longstanding engagement in southern Madagascar. The very materiality of the bracelets, as missionaries handle and treat it today, is a testament and product of this ongoing social engagement.

Bondage, Freedom, and Faith: Bracelet-Wearing and Christian Social Difference

Through their constant bodily wear and close visual proximity to their bearers, the silver bracelets magnify for missionaries the nearness of Madagascar in spite of its geographic distance from Minnesota. Lois hasn't taken her bracelets off her wrist for years, sleeping and showering with them, since the silver has become brittle and fragile to manipulation. When flying to visit her children, three of whom live in East Africa and Madagascar, Lois told me she pleads with the security personnel at the airport to let her keep the bracelets on her wrist because they often set off the metal detectors. Others expressed similar stories about the inseparability of the bracelets from one's person: one pastor explained to me that his daughter, when beginning a job as a cashier at a Minneapolis supermarket, found out that the store required cashiers to remove their jewelry while they were working. His daughter told her employer that she couldn't work there if she had to take the bracelets off her wrist, the pastor told me with a hint of pride, and eventually the supervisor acquiesced.

Another adult daughter of retired missionaries told me, as we were traveling through southern Madagascar, that her bracelet changes colors with the oils of the skin and through the different foods she imbibes that affect her body's biochemistry. In her explanation, the place of southern Madagascar and the missionary legacy, called forth through the bracelets, form a symbiotic relationship with the body, mixing with its oils and constitutive substances. Through the consubstantiation of the bracelets, missionaries embody and naturalize the legacy of involvement in southern Madagascar but, even more importantly, of faithful obedience to God. When Lois and others indicate that they never remove the bracelets from their wrists, they suggest more fundamentally that the legacy of faith cannot be separated from them, nor can they detach themselves from it.

We might wonder: who does not wear the bracelets and why? I posed this question to one missionary couple that I knew. Though they kept their bracelets at home, Lynn, a former short-term medical missionary, explained to me that his wife could not wear the bracelet because of her daily job, since she worked as a registered nurse. As for himself, Lynn linked his not wearing the bracelet to being a "farm boy," implicitly referencing the performance of heterosexuality and masculinity. I heard him use this term on one separate occasion to discuss behaviors that were slightly uncomfortable for him in Madagascar given his own gender socialization (as a "farm boy"), such as holding a man's hand as a gesture of deep friendship. Lynn also speculated that some lifelong missionaries might find the bracelets to be too "touristy," something that diminished the duration, quality, and seriousness of their involvement in the southern region and associated them with passing *vazaha* tourists. This is something I never heard verified by any lifelong missionaries involved in my research. On the whole, more women

missionaries, children of missionaries, and kin relations than men wear the bracelets in Minneapolis/St. Paul, though many men attest to having bracelets of their own that they keep at home.

The bracelets have come to be seen as synonymous with the legacy of Madagascar missionaries among their families and acquaintances in Minneapolis/St. Paul; this is the contemporary story of the missionaries, rather than that of the bracelets (cf. Frow 1991:145). Yet the bracelets carry with them other stories, less prominent among missionaries and their families, which also cannot be so easily dissociated from their form. One Tuesday afternoon Lois and I were sitting together at the lunchroom table in International Health Mission with Inga, a retired missionary to Madagascar and her current neighbor in St. Paul, and Sarah, a retired registered nurse, during a volunteer shift. As we ate bites of our sandwiches, the conversation shifted slightly to the silver bracelets that both Lois and Inga wore on their wrists. Lois explained the history of the bracelets to the women at the table unfamiliar with them: she called them "slave bracelets" that Tanosy people were required to wear to identify themselves as the "property" of slave traders within Madagascar. I found myself surprised by how quickly Lois glossed over this information without addressing its implications for missionaries who wear the bracelets today. She went on to remark that the bracelets were equally Tandroy and Tanosy, in response to a question I had on their origin. Lois observed that Inga's thinner silver bracelet appeared "Tanosy" while her thicker bracelets, with different etched patterns in the heavy material, were "Tandroy."

Many of the peoples of southern Madagascar, which American Lutherans first interacted with beginning in 1888, had been involved peripherally or directly with the

intra- and inter-island slave trade in Madagascar. Travelers' accounts and archaeological evidence both indicate that slave-holding had been practiced among southern groups since at least the seventeenth century. [36] Etienne de Flacourt, writing in 1661, observed that Tanosy lords and Mahafaly *roandria* had their own slaves (Parker Pearson 1997:411). Perhaps the most well-known early account of slave-trading in the southern region is that of Robert Drury, a captured Englishman who became a Tandroy royal slave.[37] Writing in 1729, Drury indicated that Tandroy often sold to Europeans as slaves the losing parties of raids or battles concerning cattle and royal dominion (403). Alternately, these captives could be kept as slaves of Tandroy lesser chiefs and were sometimes later exchanged for guns. Though the demand for labor was later higher among the ruling Merina in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many groups across the island came to hold slaves by the eighteenth century as "kidnap and battle victims" (Campbell 2005:67).

Within Madagascar, slave raiders forcibly removed people who were supplied or traded as slaves to Europeans, Merina Malagasy, other Malagasy groups, and for the plantation economy in the neighboring Mascarene islands of Réunion and Mauritius (Campbell 2005:66-67). Merina elite organized their political power through controlling the slave trade to the Mascarenes (67). Campbell notes,

> From 1820 to 1853, an estimated one million slaves, notably from the relatively densely populated regions of Betsileo and the south east (Antaifasy, Antaisaka and Antanosy) entered Imerina, destined for both individual service and for

[36] It is important to note that the ethnonyms Tandroy and Tanosy, which imagine a unitary ethnic group in the face of many important subdivisions, should be seen as political constructions that formed through the expansion of European involvement and Merina and French rule on the island (cf. Larson 1996, 2000).
[37] Though scholars have questioned the account's authenticity, believing it to perhaps have been written by Daniel Defoe, Parker Pearson (1997:403) suggests that its depiction of Androy verifies its reliability as a source.

> labor intensified as much of the free population was drawn into military service (67).

In the southern part of the island, some Tanosy resettled voluntarily in Réunion rather than acquiesce to Merina occupation along the southeast coast, while others moved westward to the land of Mahafaly and formed a separate series of Tanosy villages there (Burgess 1932:144). French colonists formally abolished the intra- and inter-island slave trade in 1896 but subsequently introduced other forms of forced labor, known as *fanompoana*.

The Merina empire conquered the east coast of Madagascar in 1823 and made military campaigns into the South in the 1830s and 1850s, but its rule never encompassed the region (Parker Pearson 1997:395). After the onset of colonial rule in 1896, the French government initially failed to organize the peoples of the southern region as a colonial labor force or to make the land "productive" for the colonial economy. In 1900, the French sent Senegalese soldiers to the southeast, under the direction of the French general Gallieni, in order to subdue Tandroy, Mahafaly and Tanosy. Despite the devastation of this military campaign, twentieth-century writers continued to characterize the South as an "island within an island," a trope that built upon longstanding European depictions of the region and its inhabitants as dangerous, harsh, and violent (Parker Pearson 1997:394 citing Deschamps 1960).

In the face of unsuccessful initial efforts to control the land and labor of the southern region, the French introduced in 1924 a cochineal insect that decimated the prickly pear cactus covering large tracts of land. Many people suffered famine and undertook work in this context as an unskilled, migratory labor force (Cole and Middleton 2001:8-9). Between 25 and 50 percent of the active male population of the

southern region lived outside the area by 1950, having migrated or been forcibly moved to the plantations of the north as a source of unskilled labor for work engagements (Covell 1987:20). Cole and Middleton (2001:9) emphasize that this colonial labor arrangement built upon and reinforced longstanding socioeconomic inequalities among regions, and thereby recognized ethnic groups (or *ethnies*), within Madagascar: "No other region of Madagascar has been or is as poor as the south."

The silver material or silver alloy of the bracelets appears to have had a long use in Madagascar as a sign of wealth that derived from the slave trade. Before French colonization of the island, silver was used as a form of "distributed wealth," exchange, and currency among late eighteenth century highland Malagasy slave suppliers (Larson 2000:136). In the southern region, Europeans traded silver coin for animals between 1609 and 1638 in the west-coast port at St. Augustine (Parker Pearson 1997:396). Robert Drury's journal of enslavement with the Tandroy tells that "wrist rings," valuables worn by Tandroy, were often made of imported silver (cited in Parker Pearson 1997:403). Moreover, the archeological record shows that silver rings and "manellers" of silver had been placed within the graves of high-status men as early as 1671 in such dispersed sites as Fort Dauphin in the southeast and St. Augustine in the southwest (406). These findings indicate that precious trade goods like silver rings and glass beads circulated regularly over long distances (Parker Pearson 1997:406 citing Ramiandrisoa 1991:29).

Within contemporary Madagascar, the legacy of slavery strongly shapes social relations in many regions, where the slave heritage ascribes one with a socially marginal status. Brown (2004:618) notes, "Descendants of slaves bear a deeply stigmatized identity that provides the foundation for social, economic, and political

disenfranchisement." People may in some cases conceal or successfully elude the slave heritage of their immediate ancestors, making slave descent a shifting and contested social status. Nonetheless, intermarriage between people who descend from slaves and those who descend from "free" people remains taboo in most parts of Madagascar (though see Keller 2005 and Brown 2004 for exceptions). Moreover, the predominant term for slave (*andevo/ondevo*) is a "powerful symbol" on the island and a social form through which many Malagasy imagine and experience power, colonialism, and the post-colonial state (Cole and Middleton 2001:29; cf. Feeley-Harnik 1991).

In this context, one central question remains: Why would missionaries tell a story that associates the bracelets with the history of slavery in southern Madagascar? The historical evidence does not show direct connections between the slave trade and bracelet-wearing. While it is crucial to place the contemporary practice of bracelet-wearing within the legacy of cultural imperialism and racial privilege in Madagascar, this is only part of the story. Consider, again, the way Lois described to her volunteer coworkers the history of the bracelets, suggesting their role in the slave trade yet also treating this knowledge as if it were ultimately unimportant. At the time, the quickness of her transition and lack of extended reflection on the historical description, an ethnographic fact of its own, left me with the strongest impression. Because of the conversational absences and things *unsaid* in her explanation, some may be inclined to characterize Lois as complicit in the racial privilege that has shaped the social relations of American Lutheran missionaries in Madagascar.

I suggest, however, that this exchange requires a related but somewhat different analysis. This analysis takes into account the missionaries' own socialization in

understanding selected material things – though certainly not all – as allegorical forms that are largely detached from their original referents. Lois' brief explanation to her coworkers concerning the bracelets' significance indicates, I suggest, that missionaries have understood the bracelets' significance through a set of principal symbolic linkages long fostered in the mission. Among missionaries like Lois, the effortless and unquestioned association of the bracelets with faith and with the place of the South demonstrates how these linkages grew to be assumed through more than a century of missionary involvement on the island.

Though it is difficult to know with certainty, the practice of wearing the silver bracelets may have begun as a way of witnessing the power of the Christian faith. One missionary historian notes that Tanosy in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro expressed great distrust of the early Christian church that was established there in the mid-late nineteenth century by two Merina Malagasy evangelists of the London Missionary Society. Many Tanosy initially viewed the "new praying," according to the mission account, as "another trick to entice the children to leave their parents in order later to be shipped away into slavery" (Burgess 1932:145).[38] These Merina evangelists should be considered the missionaries who were in place before American Lutheran arrival; the "Christian Merina kingdom" had sent evangelists to coastal districts that it endeavored to bring under its control or had already conquered (Raison-Jourde 1995:294). American Lutheran missionaries endeavored to distance themselves from the Merina evangelists, and they assumed responsibility for the church in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro from the London Missionary Society in 1892.

[38] The term "new praying" could have been Burgess' translation of *ny fivavahana vaovao* (the New Religion), which Larson (1997:983) suggests became a common Malagasy way of distinguishing Christianity from the (older) "practice of public supplication, *fivavahana.*"

Missionaries sought some of the first Tanosy and Tandroy converts among slaves and descendants of slaves (see Burgess 1932:147 in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro; Dahl 1934:6,10,73 in Manafiafy). The first teacher appointed to the initial American Lutheran mission school in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro was a former slave named Rabenjamina. Following his arrival in 1888, the missionary J.P. Hogstad participated in his manumission by allegedly paying the equivalent of seventy U.S. dollars to set him free (Burgess 1932:147).[39] Campbell (2005:69) notes that male slaves sometimes gained status through their involvement in Christian churches in Madagascar, beginning in the 1820s, while female slaves more often served as spirit mediums in ancestral practices.

Slavery was one issue around which early missionaries to Madagascar organized themselves and through which they made a case at home for the spreading of the Gospel. David Jones of the London Missionary Society arrived as one of the first Protestant missionaries to Madagascar in August 1818. An American Lutheran missionary historian tells that white slave traders in Madagascar viewed Jones and other missionaries as a threat to the operation of the slave trade (Burgess 1932:104). As Burgess writes, Jones joined with Robert Farquhar, the English governor of neighboring Mauritius, to oppose the slave trade in Madagascar and to organize an anti-slavery treaty with Merina King Radama I, who reigned from 1810 to 1828. Radama drafted the treaty in 1817 upon the condition that twenty Malagasy would be taken by the English to be educated in England and Mauritius. In mission historiography, the story of the treaty-signing heralds Jones as a missionary hero who saved people from bondage through his faith and bravery. Andrew Burgess, the American Lutheran missionary historian, tellingly identifies Farquhar and

[39] This story is, at least in economic terms, supported through material presented by Campbell (2005:70), who notes that a severe labor shortage in Imerina had increased the average slave price from $3 in 1820 to $36 by 1850 and $60 by 1870. Following a decrease, the price rose again to $60 around 1895.

Jones respectively as “two ministers, one for freedom from bondage, one for the freedom of the souls from the fears of superstition” (1932:104).

In his study of Merina slave trading and political alliance from 1770 to 1822, Larson (2000:230) argues that Radama I installed Jones within his royal court (*rova*) in 1821 where he operated a small school to teach English and literacy and to train students as scribes for scriptural translation. The students’ parents and others roundly opposed the missionaries, whom they saw as extensions of Radama I’s extremely unpopular foreign alliance with the British. Though many scholarly and popular accounts presume that Farquhar played a central role in ending the slave trade, Larson suggests that this triumphant narrative rarely views the Anglo-Merina alliance from the perspective of Radama I (224). Archival documents reveal instead that Radama I established the alliance for his own political and strategic purposes, enabling him to remove the old advisors of the royal court and draw together a new set of European and Malagasy counselors with peripheral social and geographic origins (226). The anti-slavery treaty that Radama officially endorsed in 1820 with the British only stopped the export of slaves from Imerina, while the demand for slaves from other parts of the island increased (Campbell 2005:67).

In addition to the practice of slave-trading in Madagascar, American Lutheran missionaries gradually associated the condition of bondage in general with a range of dimensions of Malagasy society that, in their view, needed reform. Early American Lutheran missionaries wrote to their home audiences that non-Christian Malagasy people had “bound” souls that required freeing (Dyrnes 1900 cited in Ditmanson 1927:98), were held in “bondage which is hard to break” by *ody* (amulets) (Burgess 1932:89), or that

they were “slaves of superstition” (Dahl 1934:153 quoting an unidentified Tanosy man; see also Burgess 1932:104). Moreover, missionary writers rallied home audiences around two primary social problems that they identified in Malagasy society. One was the prevention of what they deemed the infanticide of babies born on “unlucky days” and the building of church homes to “rescue” and raise these children (Burgess 1932:94-97; Ditmanson 1927:40-41,99-100). The second issue concerned the liberation of Malagasy women in the South, whom missionaries characterized as being treated by men “as slaves” (Olsen 2004:70; see also Burgess 1932:187). The well-worn theme of freedom from bondage, which van der Veer (1996:3) calls the “colonial narrative of liberation,” is not limited to American Lutheran missionary accounts of southern Madagascar. Van der Veer (1996) maintains that this widely disseminated narrative trope, through its appeal and justification for Western involvement, served to legitimate colonial rule as a moral enterprise.

The alleged historical connection between the slave trade and the silver material of the bracelets was not recognized or not discussed, at least not openly, by the contemporary Malagasy Christians and villagers that most American Lutheran missionaries knew in the southern region. Lynn, a former short-term medical missionary who worked in Ejeda and Manambaro, likened the bracelets to other significant forms of “walking wealth” held by Tandroy and Tanosy, such as cattle. One missionary pastor’s daughter explained similarly to me, while we stayed in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro, that some Tanosy kept the bracelets as family “heirlooms,” or as valuables. Her father Hank, who lived in Beloha, Ambovombe, and Fianarantsoa, told me that some bracelets, though not

all, had been *ody* (amulets) that Tandroy were not ever supposed to sell.[40] Bad times might befall oneself and one's kin relations for giving away or selling a bracelet that had been consecrated by an *ombiasa* (Malagasy ritual practitioner). But in hard times and famine, some people did sell their bracelets at the market. While most missionaries that I knew had their bracelets made by Rakoto and his son, the silversmiths in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro, some purchased their bracelets at the local markets. This situation, Hank acknowledged, created some uncertainty among missionaries as to whether the bracelets that they purchased and subsequently wore on their bodies had originally been *ody.* [41] Ultimately, the missionaries' ease with this uncertainty – perhaps noted through the bracelets by Malagasy with whom they interacted – performed for others their independence from and, in some senses, repudiation of the practices of the *ombiasa.*

Evidence exists that Malagasy Lutherans, rather than missionaries, used the bracelets and related materials of *ombiasa* and service to the ancestors as allegorical forms in their communications with missionaries. Several informants noted that some of the bracelets had been given to missionaries as symbolic leave-taking gifts from Malagasy Lutherans. Lynn compared the bracelets to other gifts that demonstrated the Malagasy Lutheran giver's commitment to the Christian faith, such as *lambamena* (burial cloths). Tandroy and Tanosy wrap the deceased in *lambamena* upon burial so that the spirit of the dead person remains with the body; in other parts of the island, cloth serves

[40] This is verified by a photographic plate in Burgess' *Zanahary in South Madagascar* (1932:87), which features a thin silver bracelet in the midst of an assemblage of *ody.* With the objects laid out as artifacts against a plain white backdrop, removed from their Malagasy contexts, the plate is entitled "Collection of Malagasy Charms."

[41] Another missionary informant, who lived for years in Ejeda in the southwest, told me that some Mahafaly placed the silver bracelets in their hair to signal to others that they were possessed by an "indwelling spirit." Among Sakalava in the northwest region of Analalava, Feeley-Harnik (1989) describes the use of silver ornaments, silver coin, "silver clubs" (*kobay fanjava*), and silver chain-link bracelets in spirit possession. These material things, some of which are given as recompense for healing or other services provided by royal spirits, constitute an income that belongs to the spirit and not the host (93).

an important subsequent role in "unwrapping," calling forth, and giving voice to the spirits of the ancestral dead in spirit possession (see Feeley-Harnik 1989:95). By giving away *lambamena* to missionaries, Malagasy Lutherans demonstrated that they were, in Lynn's words, "not bound by that spirit" of the ancestor. For those performing service to the ancestors, the consequences of not wrapping the deceased in the burial cloth could be severe: the ancestral spirit, separated from the body, might wander restlessly and torment the living. In gifting the cloth, Malagasy Lutherans ceremonially witnessed to missionaries their "freedom" from this concern and their independence from this dimension of the ancestral service.

We might well wonder if Malagasy Lutheran givers perceived these exchanges in the primarily *symbolic* way in which missionaries characterize them, since these stories take the perspective of the missionary-receiver. Did Malagasy Lutheran givers imagine the act of giving as a symbolic process and the material form as a symbol of one's spiritual state? The significance of the silver bracelets for missionaries today, like *lambamena*, may derive from the role that they played as symbolic statements of the Malagasy giver's faith. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that, in remembering the symbolic witness of some bracelets as gifts from Malagasy Christians, missionaries strengthen the contemporary understanding of the bracelets among themselves, their kin relations, and acquaintances in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Stories of the bracelets' acquisition provide an enduring way to see faith.

In seeking the mission's first converts, American Lutheran missionaries signaled the ability of the Christian affiliation to overcome the social obstacles of slave status and slave descent. Yet in doing so, they built upon the more general theme that Christianity

held the power to free the soul, a trope readily available for the taking in the Bible and in early Malagasy church history. The process of making the bracelets into allegorical forms that conveyed the power of Christianity to free the soul may be seen as part of this overarching process. But as Burgess' characterization of Jones suggests, the practice formed part of a more pervasive semiotic process of challenging the validity of Malagasy ancestral customs; realigning the interpretive field connected with ancestral practices; and marking the ontological boundaries of the Christian religion by assigning specific moral status to words, material things, and human agency (cf. Keane 2007). Among missionaries, then, the silver bracelets became signs of the capability of the Christian faith to free one from a range of "constraining" human conditions. This allegorical lesson takes precedence among contemporary missionaries over the bracelets' original use and meanings for Tanosy and Tandroy people.

Yet, I would point out that the situation in practice is more complex than this theological discourse may lead us to assume. Cole and Middleton (2001:7) observe that French colonial rule presented itself a "loss of autonomy" to the Karembola who live in southern Madagascar between the Menarandra and Manambovo rivers. Karembola characterized their experience of colonialism as a form of enslavement: they were forced to labor for others, such as carry water and build roads, and required to deny their social identity, since they were often regarded as Tandroy (10). Since some Malagasy like the Karembola of southern Madagascar made comparisons between colonial rule and enslavement, American missionaries and Malagasy Christians may have been playing upon the wide semantic field associated with slavery that was already available for the uptake among their Malagasy interlocutors.

Through the pervasive Christian discourse on the freedom of the faith as well as the symbolic inversions effected through material forms like the bracelets, missionaries appear to have imagined the Christian religion in relation to the associations made by their Malagasy social relations. Despite the wide range of church involvement and in many cases the continued practice of ancestral service among Christians (see, e.g., Thomas 2002:375 in the southeast), for non-Christian Malagasy, the Christian religion – in its prohibition or, in the least, criticism of service to the ancestors – is oftentimes seen not as a source of "freedom" but as a constraining force. People who do not abide by service to the ancestors may be regarded as "lost to their ancestors" (*very razana)*, a status comparable among Sakalava in the Analalava region to those "lost" to their families as slaves (Feeley-Harnik 1989:103). Christian teachings endeavored to invert the symbolic associations of power in relation to colonial rule and the ancestors and thereby construct freedom, or salvation by faith, as a sign. The bracelets' material qualities, their placement atop the skin as a secondary layer, and the socially recognized inability to easily remove them from the body repeatedly make one aware of this understanding of freedom.

When missionaries wear the bracelets in Minneapolis/St. Paul, many of these associations fade into the implicit or assumed past of the mission movement and remain unspoken in everyday conversation. Missionaries and their families appear to be engaging the bracelets in a second process of reorientation, which makes them into signs of faith and family heritage. One man told me, as we watched his two-year-old granddaughter playing outside and sporting the small silver bracelet his daughter used to wear, that he realized the sacrifice his parents made in not seeing their granddaughter for

years while he and his family lived in southeast Madagascar. The connection to Madagascar is a prominent theme within this heritage, materialized and made visible on the wrist. Interestingly, though, it does not retain the specificity of the social relations that likely made the bracelets important to early missionaries in the first place. As a material token of faith *in* "displacement," the bracelets simultaneously foster a kind of nostalgia among missionaries for the place of Madagascar. Missionaries like Lois made their home in southern Madagascar for thirty years, as she told me on several occasions, but they wish to pull from their experience a more general message of faith and obedience that will live on with their children and grandchildren. This act of translating their experience for subsequent generations produces some ambivalence in their own lives between their attachment to the people and place of the South and the experience of leave-taking and separation that makes displacement so spiritually meaningful.

The silver bracelets enable us to shine light on the perpetually shifting process of semiosis that the early American Lutheran missionaries participated in through their social relations in southern Madagascar. I would point out that the semiotic process of teaching Christian principles – and taking material things to be signs of abstract tenets – required several "mediations" (cf. Hull 2003). By harnessing numerous material forms in allegorical lessons, Malagasy Christians and American missionaries endeavored to root a range and shade of disparate, yet overlapping, abstract Christian principles in daily life. In addition to promoting the symbol of freedom from sin that I described here, they drew directly from the surrounding landscape of southern Madagascar. In a church-produced volume on world missions, the theologian and missionary historian Andrew Burgess (1954:82-83) observes,

> The Rev. G. Torvik, the first missionary in the heart of Androy, reached there in 1918. The beginning of his work was marked by a miracle well that was dug at the mission station [in Ambovombe] that brought a generous supply of sweet water. People flocked to the well from miles about, and, as they came to fill their containers, began to hear of the 'living water.' Twenty-five hundred people were baptized the first twenty-five years and this became one of the outstanding mission stations of our field.

Water provided the early missionaries in Ambovombe with a material form through which to communicate the regenerative properties of the Gospel message. This material form afforded a different kind of allegorical lesson from that of the bracelets and the aspects of Malagasy life symbolically linked to them.

Since water vitally supports the growth and sustenance of life, Christians rhetorically cast the "living water" of the Word as natural and critical to human life. Through his speech on the "living water," Torvik fused water's physical and symbolic properties as it emerged from the "miraculous well."[42] He claimed the well's supply of water as a divine opportunity. In recounting her father's discovery of the well in an oral history interview in 1986, Torvik's daughter, a former missionary herself, echoed this sentiment: "That is God's way of putting His stamp of approval on my father as His messenger. Opening that door. And it opened wide. The people accepted the gospel. It has been one of the fastest growing Christian churches." She went on to describe the water derived from the well as a "foretaste" of the "living water, Jesus Christ" (ALC Women in Mission Oral History Project 1986).

[42] It is important to point out that this "lesson" may have been perceived in several different ways among the missionaries' Malagasy interlocutors, as well as to question whether it was understood to be the "lesson" that missionaries endeavored to communicate in the first place. Burgess' writing presumes a causal relationship between the missionary Torvik's lesson on the living water and the Tandroy conversions that followed. The account positions the missionary in the primary active role and leaves out consideration of the Tandroy Malagasy as social actors who converted to Christianity for a variety of reasons.

My point in briefly sketching the religious significance of water is to show that the process of establishing Christianity in southern Madagascar involved *different* material things. This process acquired its efficacy from drawing upon their diverse material qualities, which could be variously interpreted, highlighted, and linked to more elaborate theological arguments (cf., Renne 2001). These material qualities continue to define the potential of certain material forms over others, such as the bracelets rather than water, to be taken into a different context and gradually reconstituted when retired missionaries bring them to Minnesota. The bracelets' specific *material* qualities of durability and portability – and their visible location on the body – share an interrelationship with their socially recognized meanings among missionaries in Minnesota. These qualities constrain and compel the bracelets' interpretation, imbuing them with renewed significance for missionaries and their acquaintances as symbols, traces, and icons of faith in displacement, southern Madagascar, and obedience to God's call.

Missionary identification with Tandroy and Tanosy people of southern Madagascar, in relation to Merina, persisted into the present day. The small population of Malagasy Lutherans in the Twin Cities and the Upper Midwest were predominantly of Merina and Betsileo descent, coming originally from the highlands south of Antananarivo where Norwegian Lutherans initially established an evangelical mission in 1866. Missionaries regularly pointed out this feature of their identity to me and suggested they led privileged lives in Madagascar in relation to Tanosy and Tandroy people of the South. These missionaries interestingly evoked as their own a cultural divide between Merina Malagasy and Tanosy and Tandroy Malagasy. They also suggested that they become *like*

southerners in Malagasy conversations with Merina, since the dialect of the Malagasy language they spoke identified them with the southern region. Finer distinctions were made about the specific affiliation of the missionary with Tandroy, Bara, Mahafaly, or Tanosy, since people pointed out that a historically contentious relationship had existed between Tandroy and Tanosy elites.

The Malagasy Lutherans that I knew in the Twin Cities noted and discussed these distinctions. One Malagasy Lutheran man named Emmanuel, whom I introduced briefly in the previous chapter, came to the United States in the late 1990s to attend the Lutheran seminary in St. Paul. During one of our conversations, Emmanuel told me that most American Lutheran missionaries see him as part of a privileged class, since he comes from Betafo in the central highlands. Rather than necessarily debating the degree of his "privilege" in relation to other Malagasy, his main contention with this distinction rested on where he believed the Malagasy Lutheran Church or FLM (*Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy*) should now be directing its greatest efforts for evangelism. Most American Lutheran missionaries who worked in rural parts of the South, Emmanuel argued, hold preconceptions about cities in Madagascar. At least in the past, he said, they believed evangelism should be directed to people in the countryside and not those in cities. "But I've seen many poor people in the cities," he said. "People that emigrate to big cities need the Gospel, too. We should not serve rural people to the detriment of those in cities. We need to do both." Emmanuel cited the rural-to-urban migrations for work that form a demographic trend in Madagascar, but he pointed out that even those people who migrate for jobs return to their families in rural areas. Those people can "carry with them" the

gospel message they have received, he said, if approached by a Christian missionary in the city where they work.

Emmanuel pursued this approach to mission work through his professional life in the capital city of Madagascar. Prior to attending the seminary in St. Paul, he worked in Christian hospital settings in Madagascar, such as the Lutheran hospital in Ambohibao, where he incorporated his faith into his daily job tasks. He later formed a clinic in the *Soixante sept* hectare of Antananarivo, one that was "holistic" in its focus on spiritual and physical healing. Emmanuel told me that he taught the clinic employees to be "disciples of Jesus" and preached the Gospel message to patients and to other doctors with whom he worked. He identified the Scripture that has spoken most to him throughout his life as Matthew 28, the "big commission" that sends Christians out into the world to "preach the Gospel to the nations." Emmanuel carried out this commission not only through his prior work in the *Soixante sept* hectare, but also in his life in Minnesota. He viewed himself as a missionary to the people of Minneapolis and introduced practices of the *fifohazana* movement to a suburban Minneapolis congregation in order to promote spiritual renewal among its membership, as I discuss further in Chapter 4.

Emmanuel's argument suggested that American Lutheran missionaries had in some ways become too closely attached to the place of southern Madagascar. This affinity for the region and people, in Emmanuel's view, blinded them to the evangelistic opportunities presented by the migration of southerners to other parts of the island, the capital, or other cities. To him, the crucial factor lie in the ability of migrants to carry the Gospel with them as they circulated between their home village and their place of work. From this viewpoint, migrants became missionaries to their own families through their

regional and intra-island circuits of movement. In his conversation with me, Emmanuel was highlighting his understanding of the Lutheran church in Madagascar as a *national* church, with "outreach" activities, medical centers, and churches throughout the island. As I describe further in Chapter 4, this understanding not only rests upon the notion that the Malagasy Lutheran Church has an island-wide scope, in contrast to the original mission church and synods that were based in the southern region, but also that the church is a Malagasy institution, or national endeavor, that is controlled by Malagasy religious authorities.

Conclusion

We might bring out a limited series of contrasts between the oral and written histories that missionaries circulate and the material forms that communicate their present-day relationship to Madagascar. I have pointed out how the silver bracelets continue to carry and bear traces to histories of social relations in southern Madagascar that play a less prominent role in the signification of the bracelets among former missionaries in Minneapolis/St. Paul. These histories add elements of uncertainty and inconclusiveness to the oral and written mission stories that have been retold and reread over the generations. Written histories of the mission hold special authority, since they situate and mark events through the sacred text of the Bible.

Through their unique material qualities and constant bodily wear, the bracelets hold the potential to represent and call forth the place of southern Madagascar, faith, and missionary relations with a heightened sense of nearness and immediacy. Yet the bracelets cannot be examined separately from the spoken and written stories that

"empower" them (Parmentier 1997:58). Hank underscored the centrality of language to the bracelet form when he told me that each one was a "conversation piece." The bracelets thus share certain features with biblical stories of concealment and revelation when they become pieces of conversation: they slightly conceal or camouflage why Madagascar missionaries wear them and conversation opens up possibilities for social connection and differentiation through the bracelet form.

By resituating the bracelets within the early social relations of missionaries in southern Madagascar, I explored in part how early missionaries imagined their work as a process of translating to their Tanosy and Tandroy interlocutors one religious and political symbol of their migration to the United States, that of freedom, building upon its viability as a widespread colonial missionary trope. My discussion suggested that the bracelets should be viewed as shifting forms and signs of the social relations of American missionaries and their Malagasy interlocutors, of Malagasy social and economic history, and of Malagasy Christian concerns. What is striking is how rapidly the bracelets have been recontextualized by missionaries in Minnesota and how the bracelets' earlier associations and value among Tanosy and Tandroy seem to have been primarily forgotten (cf. Parkin 1999:304). Besides ultimately taking the bracelets to be signs of faith, as I have argued in this chapter, the earlier associations of the bracelets may have been forgotten in part because of the sharp divide that many missionaries make between themselves and their work and that of their predecessors, whom some call "colonial missionaries." I explore further how and why retired lifelong missionaries use time to refashion their religious identity in Chapter 4.

Through the experience of leaving Madagascar, missionaries like Lois appear to be viewing the bracelets increasingly as signs of the place of southern Madagascar that they carry on their bodies. This process suggests that their primary interlocutors are no longer Malagasy people necessarily but other missionaries, their American kin relations, friends, and co-religionists. I would argue that the bracelets were always suggestive to other missionaries of the legacy of missionary involvement in southern Madagascar. But with the dissolution of the American Lutheran mission movement, certain associations have taken on greater importance than others, as missionaries now elaborate them in oral story-telling. The bracelets' portability fosters these associations, since they continue to bear traces of southern Madagascar as they move away from the region.

As missionaries bequeath the bracelets to subsequent generations, will the bracelets contribute to the ancestralization of the missionaries as historical actors? How will the place of Madagascar be constructed and known through the bracelets? Although these questions require future research, it is telling that living and deceased missionaries and their families have donated reams of their letters and official records, hand-made Malagasy baskets (*tanty*), some *lamba*, and photographs to the local church archive in St. Paul but, the archivist tells me, not a single silver bracelet. Rather than being taken out of circulation and placed in the archive, the bracelets continue to be active social forms that commemorate faith through kin relations in Minnesota.

CHAPTER 3:
INHABITING HOUSES "IN THE ROUND": EMBODIED PRACTICES AND SPACES OF MEMORY IN MINNEAPOLIS AND SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR

Introduction

The small Air Madagascar plane we occupied rose swiftly above the island's southeast coast, and my companions and I spotted the dark green columns of the escarpment lining the Indian Ocean. "Mandra-pihaona" (Malagasy, till we meet again or see you), Diane said from the adjacent seat. She explained that saying good-bye to this place, her "hometown," had been made doubly difficult by the realization that this could be the final trip to the country of her 78-year-old father Hank, a retired American missionary pastor. With Hank on the plane, the movement away from the southeast coast, which grew smaller to the eye as the plane ascended, produced for Diane the double-awareness of separation. It was not only Hank's imagined absence from his family that made the departure difficult, seen in the distance of fading landforms through the plane window, but also the changes the family had witnessed in the mission's former houses and schools of the southeast.

In return trips to the island, missionaries and their children visited one of the two American Lutheran mission cemeteries in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro on the southeast coast and Manasoa in the southwest, as well as a small number of the Lutheran schools, churches, and houses that stretched below the Tropic of Capricorn. During one journey

from Minneapolis to southeast Madagascar in November-December 2005 with a retired missionary pastor, three of his children, and two of their spouses, the sight of missionary houses became the subject of a frequent lament. The houses, many of which are now a century old, have broken windows, collapsing verandas, and a motley patchwork of roofing materials.

As we traveled, Diane, in her early 50s, reasoned that she may not have noticed the chipping paint of the mission's houses when she was young and wondered whether she sees things differently now that she has lived for so long in the United States. She also inferred that the financial resources of the church and the house occupants were few. Diane surmised that she may have a different "aesthetic" of the house than the Malagasy who live there. Despite the many ways to explain *why* the houses appeared as they did, their images persisted in our conversations. For Diane, her father, and her siblings, they became one way of visualizing and debating absence, change, and moral obligation in the relationship of former missionaries to Madagascar and Malagasy Lutherans.

Why did the houses in particular elicit such a strong response from Diane and her siblings? In this chapter, I suggest the sight of the mission houses partly had the impact it did because of the way missionaries and their families long interpreted the house and its material properties as signs. In missionary discourse, the built environment had been held as a symbol of the prosperity of the mission and of the unseen workings of God alongside human missionaries. To see the crumbling buildings was thus potentially also to observe an absence or decline in the presence of God in the region. Diane and her siblings struggled to reconcile the observed qualities of the houses with their knowledge that the

local synod of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (*Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy*, FLM), which formed in 1950, was established and thriving.

But the houses also evoked leave-taking and loss in another way among missionaries and their children who revisit them. The houses' appearance confirmed that they were, in certain respects, empty of the social relations that made them alive for Diane in the first place: the presence of other missionaries, their Malagasy Lutheran coworkers, Malagasy nannies and kitchen staff, parents, and siblings. Diane saw these houses as being inseparably tied to her parents' and other missionaries' shifting personhood, labor, and faith, as well as the family relationships that grew inside them. Because of their dynamic relationship with the missionaries who once occupied them, the houses, lacking the exterior features that once signaled their former occupants, took shape in Diane's eyes through the process of parting with her elderly father, as well as other elder missionaries that she knew as a child. The houses' architectural features, revealing signs of decay and decline to her, coincided with the aging of her father, which had served as the underlying reason for the family's trip.

In the discussion that follows, I first examine how missionary writings of the 1930s depicted the house as a form of material evidence for the spiritual infrastructure of the Malagasy church. Some mission station houses represent distinctly Norwegian spaces of dwelling among Norwegian-American missionaries, and they became interlinked through missionary exchanges of food and lodging that reinforced the ties of the "missionary family." This section is meant to provide a sense of the symbolic properties, use, and division of missionary houses by the mission board, as well as in mission discourse. The house was imagined in mission discourse as a crucially important moral

structure through which family relations received physical and spiritual nourishment. Despite efforts to attain this ideal, the following section examines how the narrated eating practices and leave-taking of parents and children in remembered house spaces differentiate and separate persons from one another. This discussion casts a purposefully wide net to examine not only how missionaries construct relationships with one another through house spaces but also how they experience separations from their children and from fellow Lutherans or spiritual kin. Finally, I consider how missionaries' contemporary "home displays" of Malagasy keepsakes in Minneapolis/St. Paul bring spiritual, ethnic-religious, and familial genealogies into a single visual field. These contemporary displays inform and underpin the remembrance of house spaces in southern Madagascar. Although I consider them separately for the purposes of discussion, they should be understood as intertwined spatial and embodied practices that take place predominantly in Minneapolis/St. Paul, at a distance from remembered house spaces in southern Madagascar.

The analysis of the house has been increasingly important in anthropology for understanding and situating kinship relations in the spaces through which they come into being. Lévi-Strauss has argued that in "house-based societies" (*sociétés à maison*) the house "reunites" a series of incompatible kinship obligations, such as that of filiation and residence (1983:155). Janet Carsten contends, in response to Lévi-Strauss, that houses on Langkawi Island "manifest" the opposing principles created through the marital relationship and cannot be considered the "objectification of a relationship," as Levi-Strauss has proposed (Levi-Strauss 1983[1955]: 155 cited in Carsten 1995:106). Carsten points out that the house is not simply opposed to the world beyond it but "incorporates

the divisions that exist outside it," forming a basis for working out the similarity and difference upon which Langkawi perceptions of kinship rest (1997:189, 130).

The study of the house inherently involves an examination of the embodiment and inhabitance of domestic spaces. In her ethnography of the process of kinship on Langkawi Island, Carsten (1997:130) argues that Malay houses may be "like bodies" in their qualities of boundedness and porosity. Bourdieu (1977) describes what might be considered a phenomenology of bodily practices inside the Kabyle house, likening the habitus of house life to the reading of a book that tacitly provides a "vision of the world" (92). He specifies that bodily movements "make the space" of Kabyle houses as they are shaped by it (1977:92). The inhabitance of domestic spaces is not likely to be as deliberate nor logocentric as the reading of the book. However, the practice of inhabiting domestic spaces, as Bourdieu suggests, configures and reflects the *process* of social relations.

Moreover, highlighting the generative dimensions of domestic spaces, Mueggler (2001:52) regards houses in Zhizuo in southwest China as "technologies for producing differential social relations" that continually open to and inflect other possibilities. In her study of one diasporic Algerian family, Bahoul (1996) shows how the house may become an image of narrative memory that lodges and generates the familial divisions and connections of a recalled past. House remembrances and remembered houses, however, might be examined with a more phenomenological approach that accounts for how people live and use these remembrances in their "present" space and time. Representations of the house pervade its spaces, whether remembered or inhabited, and cannot be disentangled from them. Bringing together these points, I endeavor to

investigate domestic spaces, following Mueggler (2001:53-54), "as perceived in spatial practices, conceived in representations of space, and lived in representational spaces."

Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995:4) have pointed out that research on the house in anthropology has been "fragmented" through a scholarly division of labor: the family and the household have been studied in demography and kinship studies; the household's production and consumption have been examined in economic anthropology; and cultural ecologists have analyzed strategies of subsistence and inhabitance that link the house's physical structure to the natural environment. Perhaps most of all, Carsten and Hugh-Jones suggest the architectural features of the house have been largely neglected in scholarly work by anthropologists. They call for studies that develop a "more holistic anthropology of the house" (4).

> It is this holistic potential of viewing houses 'in the round' which we would emphasize. The relationship between building and group is multifaceted and contextually determined, the house's role as a complex idiom for social groupings, as a vehicle to naturalize rank, and as a source of symbolic power being inseparable from the building itself (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995:20-21).

Following their approach, I view missionary houses "in the round" in this chapter and consider the significant architectural features of mission houses and the spatial divisions of the built environment, as well as the embodied practices of eating and living that take place in these spaces.

My approach to the house is not only in keeping with current scholarly efforts to develop a more "holistic anthropology of the house." The study of missionary dwellings in particular calls for this approach: through American Lutheran publications, missionaries constructed the mission's houses in southern Madagascar as spaces for moral instruction and for performing Christian social relations to non-Christian

Malagasy. Retired missionaries and their families also draw attention to the houses' architectural features, as I described at the begininning of this chapter. For missionaries, these features not only provide a testament to the presence of the divine in southern Madagascar but they also reinforce the Norwegian ethnic identity of the house inhabitants and the Norwegian origin of the American Lutheran mission. By combining an analysis of the houses' architectural and exterior features with missionaries' embodied domestic practices, I aim to develop a more complex account of how missionaries' negotiate and recognize their personhood in relation to domestic spaces and the Christian ideals they often represent in written accounts.

Scholars of colonial missions in Africa have frequently identified the house as an ideological locus of European and American missionary efforts to evangelize populations (Beidelman 1999; Comaroff and Comaroff 1990). Through domestic spaces, Noncomformist British missionaries in late nineteenth-century southern Africa endeavored to instruct moral practices of Christian personhood, gender relations, labor, and the family that derived from the missionaries' deep-seated and more extensive bourgeois models of social order, modernity, and civilization (Comaroff and Comaroff 1990: 293). Underlying these efforts was the implicit theory that the house is inseparable from the construction of Christian social relations. Comaroff and Comaroff (1990: 281) write, "Anticipating Bourdieu (1977) by more than a century, the evangelists believed that houses literally constructed their inhabitants—that their functionally specific spaces laid out the geometry of cleanliness and godliness." Comaroff and Comaroff show, however, that the efforts of Nonconformist missionaries succeeded unevenly among Tswana peoples or had consequences unforeseen by missionaries: Tswana continued to

build single-room houses in the way in which they were accustomed, but appropriated certain features of Western dwellings over others, making their houses square with a flat roof and windows (284).

Drawing upon my fieldwork and archival research, this chapter focuses upon the interrelated other side of what Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:268) call the "dialectic of domesticity" in mission work: the way houses and practices in houses shape missionaries as moral persons, forged against the actively constructed other of non-Christian Malagasy, and the way these houses still continue to be formative spaces in missionary practices of remembering and living in Minneapolis/St. Paul.[43] I hope to draw attention to the fact that the formation of missionary personhood in domestic spaces was variable, relational, dynamic, and hampered by the persistent tensions existing between the mission's represented ideals of domestic life and missionaries' individual experiences in southern Madagascar. These houses and domestic spaces endure in missionaries' lives despite their immediate absence in Minnesota.

Oasis, Sign, and Sanctuary: The House in Missionary Discourse and Practice

Missionary writings from the 1930s, about fifty years after the founding of the mission in 1888, frequently imagined the mission house as a nourishing "oasis." The term highlighted the ecological zones where most American Lutheran missionaries found themselves in southern Madagascar: the spiny desert of Antandroy in the "deep south,"

[43] As I discuss further below, colonial American Lutheran missionary writings about non-Christian Malagasy houses demonstrate how they became the "negative image" against which Christian dwellings were judged: one particularly acerbic account was written by the missionary pastor M.J. Stolee, who worked in the southeast under the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America from 1900 to 1909. The short article, circulated in a pamphlet by the Women's Missionary Federation in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, called non-Christian Malagasy houses in the southeast "filthy" and "small," alleging they were situated in a disorderly "maze" of daily life and highlighting their lack of an interior bed, chair, or table ("Madagascar," pamphlet, n.d., Evangelical Lutheran Church Women's Missionary Federation Collection, ELCA Region 3 Archives).

the dry country of the southwest surrounding Ejeda, and the more temperate coast of the Indian Ocean in the east. However, to identify the landscape in several of these areas as predominantly a desert, or desert-like, was not a neutral designation. The classification built upon a long-standing depiction of the southern "region" by French and English explorers, merchants, and colons, who recurrently characterized its inhabitants through the seemingly unproductive, barren, and inhospitable qualities of the landscape they observed (Middleton 1999).

Henri Perrier de la Bâthie, a French naturalist, explorer, and colon who was a particularly influential scientific advisor to Governor General Marcel Olivier (1924-1930), espoused the view in the 1920s that only additional water was needed to remove the entire south from its unproductive state and develop the region for the colonial economy (Middleton 1999: 226). Perrier de la Bâthie alternated between claiming Tandroy suffered from malnutrition because they did not appropriately cultivate the land, which could be immensely fertile, and arguing that the landscape was inherently impoverished, a point he had difficulty supporting given the population density of the region (229-230).

For the mission, the Christian house became seen in part as an "oasis" amidst the spiritual desert that was southern Madagascar (see allusions in Burgess 1932: 202, 208-209, 235; Dahl 1934:28, 61). For example, Burgess (1932:202) notes that, when three American Lutheran missionaries first toured Androy in 1906, Malagasy villagers living near Beloha walked eight or ten miles each day to obtain water. "But their souls were also very parched," he adds, "and they had not yet found the Source for quenching that thirst" (202). In one sense, for early missionaries, the house was regarded as a Christian

sanctuary encircled by the religious and racial difference of neighboring people. The characterization additionally interlaced the natural environment of the American Lutheran mission with deserts of the Bible, making the difficulties and obstacles missionaries encountered in establishing the mission often appear to be part of the foretold biblical world of exile. In a summary passage on the work of Lutheran Free Church missionaries in southwest Madagascar, Burgess (1932: 235) observes, quoting Isaiah 35:1, "We can truly say of His church in southwest Madagascar, 'The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."[44]

Through its location in a "spiritual desert," the house corresponded with the other symbols of hope and sustenance that missionaries distinguished among organic life forms, plants, and animals across the southern landscape. The preeminent symbols included the "Traveler's Tree" or ravinala palm (*Ravenala madagascariensis*) that supplied water stored within its trunk to parched travelers and deep underground springs that could become the source of water for wells.[45] "If [the traveler] can find no water, which is unusual in Anosy," Burgess (1932:25) writes, "he inserts a knife or sharp stick into the axis where the branches join the trunk, and a cupful of water flows out." In evoking or effusing water as a mark of regeneration, each of these landscape features were interpreted as divine signs of encouragement. In pragmatic terms, water was essential for sustaining the human population of the mission station and its accompanying church. But by constructing the house as an oasis, missionaries likened it to other water-

[44] Unless included in a direct quotation (such as this reference to Isaiah 35:1), all biblical passages in the dissertation have been quoted using *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Metzger and Murphy 1991).
[45] Trees have played an important role in conflicting claims to land among Malagasy persons and botanists, colonists, merchants, missionaries, and explorers. Focusing on the ravinala or "Traveler's Tree" of Madagascar, Feeley-Harnik (2001: 33) argues that people have used "trees to orient themselves in place and time, to articulate their relations with other living beings in their immediate and more distant surroundings, and to establish and legitimate claims to land."

producing features of the landscape and tacitly made a claim for its rootedness in Malagasy soil.

By the 1930s, the "early pioneer period" of the mission from 1888 to 1906 had ended, as it was demarcated in one influential mission history by Burgess (1932: 165). In making this distinction, Burgess explained that in these early years "the work was grounded and the foundations laid for a progressive and expanding program which bore fruit in the following years" (165). The written history of the mission played a crucial role in establishing this "foundation" through reinforcing a particular spiritual understanding of the houses, schools, and orphanages that had been built in southern Madagascar. Furthermore, these accounts recounted what missionaries had "accomplished" in spaces largely unseen by fellow American Lutherans (230).

A notable number of English written accounts of the "early period" of the mission appeared in publication in the 1930s for the purposes of gathering support for the mission among American congregants. It is primarily from these sources that I base my discussion here. In analyzing their claims, it must be kept in mind that they presented one official view of the mission. They were commissioned in some cases by the church and published by Augsburg Publishing House, its printing arm. As a result, the texts muted disagreeing voices among missionaries. They followed narrative conventions for the writing of mission history, with substantial sections of mission ethnography on Malagasy geography, religion, inter-ethnic relations, and natural history; a chronology of Christian missionization to the island; analysis of French occupation of Madagascar; portraits of Malagasy Christian martyrs and moral exemplars; and detailed discussion of the "obstacles" and conditions endured by "pioneer missionary" figures. The publications

positioned disputes, illness, discouragement, and death of missionary adults and children in a seamless movement forward in historical time, whereby the past difficulties of the mission could be taken as signs of sacrifice for the people of Madagascar, and, ultimately, as sacrifice for God.

Descriptions of the station house in mission histories of the 1930s consistently drew attention to its status as a symbol, or a representation of unseen values and transformations, rather than to the material qualities of its space or its construction. One 1938 commemorative publication celebrating the 50-year anniversary of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (later Evangelical Lutheran Church) mission explicitly demarcated the material work of building the mission's infrastructure in the southeast from its spiritual labor.

> To the human eye a mission station appears to be a compound of buildings: residences, churches, school houses, and sometimes hospitals and dependencies, but it is more than this. It is a power house with transmission lines running out in every direction carrying messages of light and life to a dying world. […] Simultaneously with the raising of the buildings the foundation of the spiritual Temple is laid, and some day with the grace of God it will be finished. Meanwhile the mission station stands as a symbol of something new that has come into the community (Yearbook 1938:34).

In the poetic language of "building," the writer of this passage linked the mission's built infrastructure to the "spiritual Temple," referencing the sacrificial death of Jesus for human sin. Most Lutherans believe this sacrificial death ultimately obviates the need for a (third) physical Temple. The station buildings, including the house, concealed the workings of divine "transmission lines" that undergirded their presence. Readers of the passage were encouraged to make a reassessment of the stations' visual appearance, suggesting the untrained perception of the "human eye" failed to account for the symbolic properties of the built environment.

In addition to the attention drawn to the symbolic properties of the house as a whole, the supporting materials of missionary houses were regarded as signs of the permanence of the church in Madagascar. By 1938, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America had established 11 mission stations and 127 outstations in the southeast alone (Yearbook 1938:19). The mission stations stretched from Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro in Antanosy on the southeast coast to Tsihombe in Antandroy. The Lutheran Free Church in the southwest surrounding Tulear had built stations in Manasoa, St. Augustine, Ampanihy, Isoanala, Benenitra, Bezaha, Betioky, and Betroka (Ose 1979).[46] By 1926, the Lutheran Free Church counted eight mission stations and 67 outstations in the southwest (Ditmanson 1927:77). In an arduous process typically overseen by an American missionary and involving many hired Malagasy laborers, houses were constructed with locally available or shipped lumber, stone, sundried brick, or cement block as the American Lutheran missionaries moved further inland.

At the turn of the twentieth century, some missionaries built temporary residences using the branches and fronds of the ravinala tree (Burgess 1932:141). The ravinala was the principal house-building material of Tanosy Malagasy in the South, as well as the mission's "outstations" in rural villages, which were run by Malagasy catechists. In some mission accounts, the ravinala was characterized as an impermanent building material that was replaced by a more "substantial" one when the mission constructed stone, lumber, or cement-block structures (Thompson 1931). Thus, at least two interrelated

[46] The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America and the Lutheran Free Church (also initially Norwegian Lutheran) maintained separate but primarily cooperative missions to southern Madagascar from 1888 until 1963. Through a sequence of mergers, the churches united to form part of the American Lutheran Church. The United Norwegian Lutheran Church merged into the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in 1917 with two other Norwegian Lutheran synods. Predominantly German, Norwegian and Danish Lutheran synods united to form the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1960, and the Lutheran Free Church joined the ALC in 1963. Following the merger, the previously separate American Lutheran missions to Madagascar became one.

layers of interpretation surrounded the houses' material properties. From one perspective, the houses' materiality was to be understood ultimately as a sign of the unseen work of the divine in building the Malagasy church. Yet at the same time, the houses' very materiality, particularly the stone, cement-block, and wood building materials, was considered a sign of the mission's permanence in relation to the structures of surrounding Malagasy.

By encasing the houses' material properties in a discourse about their permanence or transience, the houses became chronotopes of their inhabitants' souls. If the exterior built environment did not provide an indicator of the inhabitants' religious affiliation, certain material features of the interior spaces identified houses (and their inhabitants) as Christian to missionaries. The director of the Manafiafy Girls School, Lillian Tysdal, praised in 1956 the appearance of the house of a graduate of the school's home economics curriculum, now the wife of a Malagasy Lutheran pastor. "We were invited into her orderly home which had a table covered with a colorful embroidered cloth and a bouquet of flowers. There were Bible pictures on the walls," Tysdal wrote. "Homes like this are what will make our Malagasy Church strong and change Madagascar into a Christian nation" (Tysdal 1956:33). While Tysdal never mentioned whether the exterior appearance of the house distinguished it from others, she indicated her desire that non-Christian neighbors would be able to take the house's interior features, like she did, as "an imprint of the joy of the Lord" (Tysdal 1956:33).

It is important to keep in mind that the Malagasy living in the immediate areas surrounding the mission stations had their own evaluations of the houses' exterior appearance. In ethnographic research in the Manambondro region of southeast

Madagascar, Thomas (2002) observes that people living in rural villages contrast Malagasy ways (*fomba-gasy*) with the ways of foreigners (*fombam-bazaha*). This distinction, Thomas (2002:375) reports, has "distinctive moral overtones" that associate city or town dwellers with the self-interest and moral corruption of *vazaha* (Malagasy, foreigners). One of the ways people in the Manambondro region organize this moral geography of town and country is through houses: town dwellers live in what people call *tranom-bazaha* (foreign-style houses), which have a "markedly different" design, furnishings, and spatial layout than the houses of rural Malagasy dwellers (377). Foreigners' houses, people observe, have fences around them and city dwellers tend to eat, like *vazaha*, in separate households rather than sharing food across them, all activities that reinforce the idea that city dwellers and *vazaha* "live for themselves" and not others (377). Thomas indicates, therefore, that rural dwellers in the Manambondro region of the southeast in fact evaluate the difference of foreigners' houses negatively and associate their observed features with the moral dubiousness of the ways of foreigners (*fombam-bazaha*).

Opposing views such as these do not often appear in mission histories, which describe missionary homes as morally virtuous through the features I described in this section. Written histories of the 1930s built the mission's foundation by drawing attention to the houses' permanence, constructing them through the natural environment of southern Madagascar, and making them chronotopic structures. Interestingly, even though mission writings emphasized the permanence associated with the wood building material of mission houses, a number of American Lutheran houses in southern

Madagascar were the ultimate "mobile homes," prefabricated in Norway, transported by ship, and rebuilt in Madagascar.

Remembering Station Houses as Norwegian Dwellings

While many missionaries and their children that I knew expressed discomfort with reading the written accounts of their "pioneer" and "colonial" predecessors, they took part in a variety of communicative practices, some a great deal more implicit than the retelling of mission history, that influenced how the mission houses in southern Madagascar were perceived, understood, inhabited, and remembered. One story often told to me by informants concerns the Norwegian origin of American Lutheran station houses in the coastal regions of the southeast and the southwest. The Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS) had pre-fabricated in Norway a number of houses for mission stations in coastal areas of Madagascar, where the proximity to water made viable marine transfers of lumber.

The first American Lutheran missionary, the Norwegian-born pastor J.P. Hogstad, ordered two pre-fabricated houses for mission stations from the NMS shortly after he arrived in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro in 1888, aided in his travel from Antananarivo by the Norwegian missionary Nielsen-Lund. (See Figure 3.1) The lumber for the two houses was subsequently "cut, fitted and numbered" by a Norwegian carpenter (Stolee n.d., Women's Missionary Federation Collection). The numbering of the boards provided instruction to the builder concerning the sequential order by which the lumber was to be assembled at the designated house site. Nails, paint, glass panes, and all other building tools were loaded aboard the NMS mission carrier *Paulus* (named after the apostle Paul)

in Stavanger, Norway and delivered to the port in Ft. Dauphin on November 3 of Hogstad's second year in the southeast (Stolee n.d., Women's Missionary Federation Collection; Stolee c. 1945). The lumber was obtained from Norwegian trees (probably pine, birch or fur) and partitioned into ready-made pieces of walls, roof beams, and floorboards. Some pre-fabricated American Lutheran houses remain standing in their original foundation in Madagascar today as the property of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (*Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy*, FLM).

The represented domestic space of these station houses in Madagascar brought missionararies into Norwegian spaces of dwelling, reinforcing the ethnic-religious identity espoused by most American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar. Although missionaries today recall these houses as distinctly Norwegian, Skeie (1999) suggests the Norwegian houses that were erected in Madagascar resembled continental European house designs, particularly Swiss ones, of the mid-nineteenth century more than common Norwegian houses of the period. As part of a new mission society "on the periphery of Europe," Skeie argues that Norwegian missionaries were largely influenced by the more powerful mission establishments of imperial nations, such as the London Missionary Society (82).[47]

As with other missionary societies of the period, Norwegian missionaries frequently built their houses on hilltops in Madagascar, which visibly laid claim to their occupation of the place and induced the holiness believed in the highlands to encircle mountains and raised landforms (Skeie 1999:80). For the Norwegian Missionary Society, the term "station house" or "station" inextricably connected the house to work and to the

[47] Among other features, Norwegian station houses included a fireplace, which Skeie (1999:83-84) suggests may have been an indication of British influence in their architectural design.

larger purpose of "occupy[ing] a place" (*besette et Område*) (79). Some missionaries temporarily lived in the "rented houses" of Malagasy nobility (*Andriana*), which may have associated them with the nobles' high social standing (79). While prefabricated houses were eventually placed along the coast, Norwegian mission houses in the highlands were built of local materials, such as sundried earth bricks, and adjustments were made to the structures to accommodate the local environment: the overhang of the roof protected the brick walls of some houses from softening in heavy rain (82).

The living conditions of Norwegian missionaries and their families who arrived in Madagascar beginning in 1866 supported a process of social mobility, particularly for male missionaries (Skeie 1999:83; Nyhagen Predelli 2003, 2001).[48] Mission houses in Madagascar included rooms with specific purposes and functions, tending to segregate persons along the lines of gender, age, and social status as was the growing practice among the middle class in Norway and the rest of Europe (Skeie 1999). For instance, Malagasy servants who were employed by the missionary family slept in the "kitchen house," a separate building that was adjacent to the main structure (82). Most Norwegian male missionaries had been recruited from families of farmers, cotters, artisans, or petty traders in villages along the southwest coast of Norway between Bergen and Nedesnes, where the missionary movement had strong support (Simensen 1985: 19, 27-28 cited in Skeie 1999: 77). House spaces among Norwegian farming families, from which most male missionaries had come, were not segregated to the same extent as mission station houses in Madagascar until the early twentieth century (Skeie 1999:83).

[48] The Norwegian Missionary Society arranged Norwegian "brides" for male mission school graduates who did not pay their own tuition; those who did were able to marry of their own accord. For the marriages arranged by the NMS, the selected women typically came from families of higher class standing than the male missionaries, as judged by their fathers' occupations (Skeie 1999; Predelli Nyhagen 2003, 2001).

For Norwegian missionaries who settled in the highland regions of Vakinankaratra and Betsileo, European-designed houses were also places where values and practices of "Norwegianness" could be cultivated and maintained (Skeie 1999). This form of ethnic nationalism aligned the material accoutrements of middle-class life with Norwegianness, at a time before Norway was a fully independent nation-state (see Chapter 1). The first generation of Norwegian male missionaries in Madagascar sometimes had a higher standard of living in these two regions of the southern plateau than their middle class counterparts did in Norway. For example, missionaries not only lived in houses that divided persons on the basis of social standing, as was more the contemporary practice of a Norwegian elite, but they also had daily access in the highlands to an assortment of meats (e.g., pork, turkey, duck, and hen) and other foods that would have been beyond their ordinary means in Norway.[49] Station houses featured furnishings largely from the missionary woman's "dowry," filled with the commodities (e.g., duvets, linens, meat and coffee grinders, glasses, clocks, lamps, vases) common among the Norwegian middle and upper classes. Missionaries sent photographs, letters, and articles to supporters in Norway that documented their ability to keep a "Norwegian home" in Madagascar (Skeie 1999: 85).

The prefabricated Norwegian houses of southern Madagascar still play a substantial role in fostering connections among American Lutheran missionaries in Minnesota. People today identify the houses through the multi-generation genealogies of their occupying families. The verbally recounted occupants of mission houses anchored me during my research to other missionary families in Minneapolis/St. Paul. On several

[49] Skeie (1999:88) notes that Norwegian missionaries' standard of living in Madagascar varied according to their proximity to the Antananarivo main market and the NMS office in the city.

occasions, I was introduced to someone by a missionary I knew by means of my ancestors' role in occupying the same house as the new interlocutor before me. At the missionary reunion in March 2005, the mention of the Tolagnaro/Ft. Dauphin station house sparked a torrent of social connections through a single dwelling. I was eating lunch one day with Maggie, a short-term missionary who taught music with her husband at the American School for missionary children from 1976 to 1980, and Karen, a single woman missionary and daughter of missionaries who grew up in Madagascar and worked as a teacher from 1952 to 1976. Maggie had just told us that, while in Madagascar, she lived in the station house in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro. One day she was washing a window, perhaps a bit too hard, and the entire wall of the house swayed back-and-forth, as if it were about to collapse. I asked Karen if this was because the walls were all one piece, prefabricated in Norway, and she agreed that this could have been the case. Karen joked that these wood houses only "stood up" because the termites coursing through the walls and floorboards "held hands."

As it turned out, the house where Maggie lived in Ft. Dauphin is the same one my great-grandparents occupied from 1897 to 1916. A color-tinted postcard of the house, with my great-grandparents standing in front of it, lay on a table in the chapel during the retreat, which the organizing couple brought with them and later gave to me as a parting gift. (See Figure 3.1) Additionally, during our lunch, Karen mentioned that she was born in the Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro house, where the midwife and deaconess nurse Sister Mette Haugen assisted in her birth in 1927. On my way out of the cafeteria after lunch, I met another retired missionary couple who told me that Matthew Ringnes' parents, teachers at

the American School for missionary children from 1967 to 1976, lived in the station house, as did Lois' family.

People placed greater importance on the spatial contiguity of relations in missionary houses than their temporal contiguity for the processes of social incorporation into the "missionary family," a term that conventionally encompassed living and dead missionaries and their families. In Chapter 1, I described how the term "missionary family" may have been used by the church to portray early missionaries as a unified Norwegian workforce. Georg Sverdrup, the Norwegian theologian, expressed that hope that the American Lutheran mission to Madagascar might be a "conjoining endeavor" and bring together Norwegian-American Lutherans in the Midwest after a series of divisive doctrinal disputes in the late nineteenth century. When missionaries talk about the "missionary family" or "missionary community" today, they express a sense of reverence for these relationships of spiritual kinship and verbally position Jesus Christ as the tie that binds them together. But in moments of less direct focus on the "missionary family," they also indicate that they formed social relationships with other missionaries in Madagascar through sharing food, prayer, and space within and across distinct houses. These relationships took shape in the immediate absence of missionaries' siblings and parents, who remained often in the Midwest United States or who grew distant because of the geographic separation.

Among American Lutheran missionaries in Madagascar, mission houses were considered property held in common. The ALC/ELCA owned the houses, as well as the land on which they were built, and paid for their upkeep until ownership was gradually transferred to the Malagasy Lutheran Church, primarily in the late 1970s and early

1980s.[50] Lois' daughter Carolyn, a missionary in southeast Madagascar with her husband from 1983 to 1988, explained to me that the houses didn't "belong" to anyone when she was a child in the early 1960s. If someone was away in the United States on a furlough, or leave period, there weren't enough houses to let one stand empty and it was occupied. The fact that the houses did not technically belong to any one missionary family tended to mask the role of property in "cutting the network" of relations between missionaries and local Malagasy people, who typically were not potential long-term house occupants (Strathern 1996).

The importance of spatial contiguity for missionary kinship was further underlined in stories of road travel across southern Madagascar. Since missionaries spent most of the year in dispersed "stations," trips by car were occasions to reinforce ties among missionaries and their families who stayed under the same roof. Visits were recalled to me as predominantly peaceful and harmonious times; whatever tensions or disagreements may have been present among visitors and hosts were largely erased in these recollections. One recently retired registered nurse who worked with her husband in the southwest surrounding Ejeda and in the capital city explained that she and her husband stopped every few hours to see other missionaries when they traveled in the South in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The experience at each house was "like going home to family," she said: they were "always fed" and given a place to stay overnight.

For those who were not long-term missionaries nor a part of the sizeable missionary conference of the late 1960s and early 1970s, remembered travel among the

[50] Lois' husband, a missionary pastor, reported in December 1978 on a postcard to the foreign mission secretary of the American Lutheran Church that he had just signed 84 times on 28 mission land titles, transferring ownership formally to the president of the Malagasy Lutheran Church in Antananarivo (ALMF, Miscellaneous Papers, ELCA Churchwide Archives, Chicago).

station houses during the mid-late 1970s was sometimes taken as a sign of change in the presence of the American Lutheran mission in southern Madagascar. One short-term, volunteer medical missionary named Lynn, who worked primarily in Manambaro between 1977 and 1978, explained to me that he, his wife, and their infant son lived in the South when many "lifers" or lifelong missionaries left the country. Lynn and his family made several trips from Manambaro in the southeast to Ejeda in the southwest, the locations of the two hospitals established by the American Lutheran mission. In 1977, there were some sixteen American families in southern Madagascar during the family's first trip to Ejeda, and Lynn and his wife stopped in Ambovombe, Tranoroa, and Ampanihy to visit some of them. By the time they left Madagascar in 1978, there were no stops for Lynn and his family to make along their trips between Ejeda and Manambaro. For Lynn, recalled road trips among station houses in southern Madagascar could be taken as circuits of temporal passage. Moving across the landscape and among the station houses marked historical change in the philosophy underpinning the mission enterprise.

The automobile was the primary means by which missionaries interlaced the geographically separated houses of the missionary family. However, it could become house-like during trips to visit Malagasy Christians or evangelize areas without an established church. When missionaries made trips to the "outstations" of the surrounding countryside, they slept inside their car overnight, on the floor of the local church building, or in Malagasy houses. While some missionaries stayed in Malagasy houses when they traveled, others couched the decision to sleep in the car or nearby church as one based upon "comfort," though the cement or packed dirt church floor may have provided little relief after a long drive. Hank, who lived in Ambovombe, Beloha,

Antanimora, Antananarivo, Bezaha, and Fianarantsoa during his time in Madagascar (1956-1990), explained that when making visits to more rural villages surrounding Ambovombe he and his wife Patricia filled their car with supplies and drove to several locations in one day. Their car was outfitted with a flannelgraph (used in visually conveying Bible stories and sermons), communion supplies, aspirin, a medication from the Bayer company for "bedbugs," insecticide, anti-malarial medication, church literature, and hymn books.

On these occasions, the car became a traveling representation of missionary services, including medications for physical ailments, the material supplies to hold communion or sing in worship, and books that provided the Gospel message. Perhaps even more importantly, the range of supplies carried inside the car paints a portrait of how non-Christian and Christian Malagasy viewed foreign missionaries and the mission establishment when missionaries visited their villages, and of how material exchanges of medicine constituted a significant part of the relationship. Automobiles, which were owned individually by missionaries, operated as mobile station houses or as moving boundaries of the mission or church in these instances.

Verandas, Rooms, and Windows: Constructing and Dividing American Lutheran Spaces, Persons, and Bodies

Inside American Lutheran houses in southern Madagascar, like those of their Norwegian Lutheran counterparts, spaces were complexly layered on a public-private continuum. The original American mission station houses featured a detached kitchen (for the heat it produced), a front living room, two stories or one story with a large attic,

at least two bedrooms, and a sweeping veranda. Some houses built at a later time, such as the one in Bezaha, included three bedrooms, a dining room, dinette, living room, kitchen, an extra storage room, and a garage. The station house sufficed as a family residence for a missionary couple and their children, but also operated as the business office for the missionary pastor or doctor; waystation for visiting dignitaries, foreign travelers, and missionaries; and sometimes a meeting place for local Christians.

In photographs and other remembrances, the veranda often became a gendered space demarcating the boundary of the house and the outside world of the surrounding village or town. One missionary to Madagascar from 1955 to 1973 and son of missionaries, whom I call Harold, wrote a short article about his childhood in Betroka in a 2004 church publication, which he gave me at the 2005 missionary reunion. In the article, Harold recalled,

> The veranda of our house in Betroka was the gathering place for women and children as [my mother] taught them stories and songs about Jesus. The singing provided a beautiful backdrop as they learned to sew, crochet, knit, and mend clothes as well as to care for their health. My brother, sisters, and I were part of her enraptured audience.

Women missionaries held sewing lessons and Bible study on the veranda of the house or, in one case, sold items "not needed," such as second-hand coats, dresses, thread, crochet hooks, and chairs, in a sale on the "back porch" (Helland Papers 1937: 17 July 17). Malagasy vendors brought vegetables and meats to the veranda to sell. Some medical missionaries cared for patients who lined up on the veranda or porch of their homes. In the story I was told by a medical doctor who worked at the Lutheran hospital in Manambaro from 1972 to 1980, a married missionary woman was remembered fondly to have taken in the sick, traveling, and dispossessed, for whom no one else would care, and

to have transformed the veranda of her house into sleeping quarters where she nursed people back to health.

Images of the veranda as a boundary-marker were not always so harmonious, as the space of the house veranda, windows, and doors also represented the difficulties of expectations and loss in relationships among missionaries and their children. Harold's brother Ned, a retired missionary pastor who worked in St. Augustine from 1954 to 1960 and son of long-term missionaries, recalled to me his younger sister's death through his placement from within the family station house in Betroka. After his two-year-old sister died of pneumonia following a bout with measles, he and his older brother Harold had been quarantined inside the house for fear that they were still contagious. Through a glass windowpane, they watched their sister's funeral procession, led by their father and the local congregation, as it moved from the house toward the church graveyard. In the narrative, the windowpane marked the "isolation" Ned said he felt as a child who was unable to obtain physical comfort upon his sister's death nor later discuss it aptly with those around him. Just as the veranda, windows, and doors could become signs of the opening of the house onto the exterior world, they also could be taken as signs in narrative and in practice of closing off relationships or of the inability to overcome social barriers. In Ned's story, the funeral procession and the threshold of the house's window marked the passage of his sister's death, as well as his bodily separation from her and his other family members.

Tensions existed between missionaries' desire to keep the house as a "family" space and the demands of their call to mission work. While building a Lutheran health department in the capital city in the late 1970s, one missionary couple framed the

intrusion of work into their "family life" through the streams of architects and guests they lodged, the temporary storage of medicines in their bedroom, and the hiring process they undertook inside the house. Rose, a rehabilitation nurse, wrote in a mission publication the following year: "This has been a year of increasing time for reflection, as the health department activities no longer take place in our home. Our children, when home on vacations, also express thankfulness for this increase in family life and privacy" (SALFA Supplementary Report 1985, ALMF Blue Book).

While work activities sometimes disrupted family life, certain spaces within mission houses were deliberately transformed into spheres of medical treatment and care. In the early 1970s, the house for women missionaries on the grounds of the Manambaro Lutheran Hospital in the southeast held several bedrooms that were used to treat missionaries who needed medical attention. American missionaries and some French persons did childbirth, small surgeries, and recovery in these house bedrooms, rather than in the hospital building. Lynn told me he learned that he and his wife were one of the first missionary couples to use a Malagasy midwife for their son's birth in 1979. He said he was surprised to discover that almost all of the births of missionaries prior to that time were assisted by missionary doctors. When he was in Madagascar, there was an infirmary bed in a family house where missionaries went if they were ill or in labor. When I asked a short-term missionary nurse why this was the case, she said the hospital was something Americans would not be comfortable with or used to – it had multi-bed rooms where families of patients would sleep on the floor or under the bed, no food service, and a kitchen where people cooked their own food over an open fire.

To place childbirth and medical procedures that breached the ordinary comportment of the body inside the recesses of the house was also to suggest the house space formed a protective and constitutive social layer to the body. By giving birth inside the house, the spaces reinforced the ethnic-religious personhood of the laboring woman and the newborn, as well as the social conventions of modesty and privacy to which some attributed the practice. One implication was that neighboring Malagasy did not abide by the same social values of bodily comportment as American missionaries. Thus, house spaces were not simply opposed to the world that existed beyond them but inflected and made by its qualities and divisions (Carsten 1997:133).

Language also took on the qualities of the house spaces in which it was spoken. In conversation with me, some women missionaries located their spoken Malagasy in the house spaces where they worked (with hired Malagasy cooks and nannies), calling it "kitchen language" and implicating its unsuitability in their eyes for spaces beyond the kitchen. They marked their variety of Malagasy in comparison to others, constructing its rudimentary, task-oriented qualities. Women, like men, attained varying levels of facility with the Malagasy language, since they typically received at least nine months and up to three years of Malagasy language training upon arrival in Madagascar. Until the 1970s they first studied French at the Alliance Française or in private tutoring for one year in Paris after leaving the United States. While there certainly could have been higher levels of spoken competence in Malagasy among pastors, theological speech, or speech that expounded theological principles or revealed the "Word of God," was often remembered as the most "sophisticated" or rhetorically elaborated kind of language in spoken Malagasy. The implication was that it required a heightened level of spoken competence

than speech used in the kitchen. Language itself, therefore, communicated the ideological separation in the mission between preaching the gospel and using dwellings and domestic spaces for moral instruction.

The assignment of living quarters by the mission board also marked the differential treatment and value accorded to missionary activities. Not everyone lived in station houses, which were often more spacious and well-appointed than the other available dwellings. The teacher at the boarding school for missionary children in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro occupied the "teacherage" beside the school building. Smaller houses had been constructed as needed around the Manambaro Hospital grounds and in other locations to house small families, short-term missionaries, and those who had newly arrived in the country. In the late 1930s, the lack of suitable housing for single women missionaries prompted the Women's Missionary Federation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to raise funds for a multi-story house in memory of Caroline Thompson, a Lutheran deaconess nurse who died at sea in 1917.

Single women missionaries had sometimes stayed with missionary families when they first arrived in Madagascar or if no other housing was available.[51] However, over time, this arrangement was viewed as less than ideal for both the hosting family and the single woman. Married women became responsible for supplying an additional person in

[51] Although single women could be missionaries, it was considered inappropriate for men to remain unmarried as missionaries. In the early years of the mission, male missionaries initially traveled to Madagascar on their own to survey their assigned location in the South and establish a station house. The mission board sometimes selected a woman to be the missionary's wife and sent her after one year had passed to join her future husband and be married in Madagascar. In most other cases, missionaries were married before they departed for Madagascar. These arrangements reflected the different construction of male sexuality and female sexuality within the mission, and the association of sexuality and race. It was believed that men could be "tempted" to have improper sexual relations with Malagasy women. Their sexuality was characterized as something that had to be kept in check through the moral influence of their wives. Single American Lutheran male missionaries have worked in Madagascar in the recent past, but there continued to be few in proportion to their female counterparts.

the house with meals and sleeping quarters. If they got along well with the family, single women often still remained guests in the house. In perhaps the best case, single women became "like family" to a family unit. Consider, for example, the story of Margaret, whom I introduced at the very beginning of the dissertation. When her family was stationed in Manafiafy, Lois, her husband, and their six children grew close to Margaret, a single missionary nurse who worked at the Manafiafy Girls' School from 1952 to 1970. Lois described Margaret as an "aunt" to her children, "closer" than many other relatives, and Lois' daughter Carolyn affectionately referred to Jean in her stories as "Auntie Margaret." Lois pointed out to me that Margaret came from a "dysfunctional family," which emphasized the absence of kinship relations in her life that the missionary family ties filled.

To summarize, even though houses became crucially important signs of building the church, the activities undertaken in their spaces were ideologically subsumed in the mission under the preaching of the gospel. This distinction refracted the divisions in the mission between the work of women missionaries, who worked more often than men with the body (e.g., as nurses) and in domestic spaces (e.g., raising small children, holding sewing classes on the veranda, overseeing household staff), and the work of ordained male pastors, who fulfilled the mission's explicitly stated purpose of preaching the gospel. Indeed, in 1984, the language used by the American Lutheran Missionary Fellowship still marked the ideological separation of the material and the spiritual: the Fellowship's "Material Needs Committee" coordinated the inventory and requests for mission house furnishings, while the Fellowship's "full statement of purpose" focused upon the work of "proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ" in Madagascar and to

fulfilling each missionary's "spiritual needs" through partnership with the Malagasy Lutheran Church (ALMF Blue Book 1984). I hope to have shown, however, that the examination of remembered domestic spaces reveals a more complicated and less static picture of missionary relations: male missionary doctors and lab technicians also worked with the body's healing in medical care and their work was sometimes located inside interior bedrooms of mission houses, where missionaries gave birth and recovered from small surgeries. Additionally, people recalled that certain station houses in Madagascar were Norwegian structures that reinforced the ethnic identity of their missionary inhabitants. These practices suggest missionaries' gender, ethnic and racial identity, and vocation has unfolded, and continues to take shape, through the domestic spaces they inhabit, as well as the stories they tell about these houses, their interior spaces, and their relationship to the outside world in southern Madagascar.

In the following section, I examine how former missionaries to Madagascar have enacted and responded to the multi-positional obligations and ideals of different works of family in their lives. Examining the domestic practices of daily life within the house, as they are narrated today, reveals some tensions in how lived kinship relations compared with the ideals of the house set forth in missionary discourse. Kinship work strives not simply to secure ever-elusive connections, but also to differentiate and separate persons and relations. The practices of food preparation and eating, for example, have distinguished some missionaries as Norwegian-Americans in southern Madagascar. The imagined and embodied spaces, exchanges, and flows of house spaces foster the classification of certain kinds of persons and relations among persons, yet simultaneously "cut networks" with social others through limiting the definition of kin (Strathern 1996). I

wish to show, therefore, how these narrative remembrances situationally reinforce the production of specific *kinds* of persons and relations, as well as how they attempt to resolve the moral problems that arise through acts of remembering.

Remembered Tensions of Kinship and House Life in Missionary Families

Missionary domesticity was bound up in a critique of the "home life" and family relationships of surrounding non-Christian Tandroy, Mahafaly, Bara, and Tanosy Malagasy. In early-mid 20th century missionary writings and in some cases still to this day, non-Christian Malagasy families were depicted as too reliant upon the local ritual practitioner (*ombiasa*). Parents appeared willing to "cast off" infant children born on days deemed unfavorable, a practice repeatedly labeled "superstitious" in American mission publications (see e.g., Burgess 1932: 94-97, Nelson 1941, Helland 1944: 42). The "rescue" and institutional mission upbringing of these infant children became a major focus of the American Lutheran missions to southeast and southwest Madagascar. With a keen awareness that the children were the "future church" (Tysdal 1949), non-Christian Malagasy homes were viewed as dangerous influences on Christian children, as well as upon adult converts who attended the mission schools (e.g., Burgess 1932:152). Steps were taken to limit and monitor home visits. According to one missionary account from Manasoa in the southwest, potentially unsettling influences in the relations of these homes included the presence of non-Christians; "low moral standards"; and people's reliance upon an *ombiasa* (Quanbeck and Quanbeck 1936:31).

One mission memoir that has recently been published recounts the lives of Karl and Astrid Olsen, a married couple who worked as Lutheran Free Church (now ELCA) missionaries in Madagascar from 1950 to 1969. In 1950, the foreign mission secretary of

the Lutheran Free Church advised Astrid and other "missionary wives" of the time that their "main work was to be a wife and a mother" and to maintain a Christian "home" as a "familiar oasis" for the family (Olsen Davis and Olsen 2004: 88). The short-term missionary to Madagascar, American Lutheran church secretary, and author, Andrew Burgess, surmised in 1932 that the "quiet Christian home life is more effective than many sermons" in reaching non-believing Malagasy people. He further noted that "the missionary who is far from his own country and relatives finds his family a very special source of joy and strength" (236). These admonitions carry an awareness that doing domestic work is an extra-domestic, "public" performance of Christian faith, which should be seen by non-familial others. At the same time, the house provides a space of sanctuary, replenishment, and retreat ("familiar oasis") for American missionary relations.

While American Lutheran missionaries worked to perform "proper" and acceptable Christian family relations to surrounding Malagasy in the visible spaces of the house, creating these spaces as a religious "public," many were unable to secure this ideal of Christian family relations in practice. Missionary couples sometimes, but not always, hired Malagasy cooks and nannies to care for their young children, as women missionaries, like their husbands, frequently pursued a full slate of Bible studies, sewing lessons, and teaching outside the home with women congregants. Moreover, their children usually left home at the young age of six to attend a mission boarding school with "house parents" in Fort Dauphin/Tolagnaro, which became known alternately as the "American School," "The Home," or *Tranovato* ("stone house" in Malagasy, after its

somewhat unusual building material for the region).[52] (See Figures 3 and 4) Children lived at the boarding school for up to nine months of the year, and visitation was difficult for many parents, some of whom required two or three days of travel to reach Fort Dauphin.[53]

"The Missionary's Gethsemane": Leave-Taking between Parents and Children

The separation of missionaries and their children is often described as a "sacrifice" of mission work, suggesting the test of faith in the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. One woman, Rose, told me that she could handle all other aspects of life as a missionary except the separation from her four children, which she said "almost killed" her and her husband Norman. Rose explained that it was with "grace" and the certainty of their call that they made it through the experience.

> It's said, you know, God gives grace if he really wants you doing something and we believe that because that's what we experienced. It's the only way our kids made it through. And to this day they all say thank you for the experience. But we caution them, 'if you want to visit Madagascar, sure it's your home' … our daughter in Northfield says 'it's one of my many homes.' But we cautioned our children, 'unless you have a call, don't try it. You might not last more than a month.' Because we are firm believers that there was a spiritual call … that the Lord developed *in* us over the years.

Rose's emphasis on the suffering of leave-taking between parents and children, likening it to a near-death, echoes a more pervasive discourse among Madagascar missionaries. In

[52] The missionary children's school was first established in 1915, and it was closed in 1981 by the American Lutheran Church because of the decreasing number of missionary children in Madagascar. High school-age children of American Lutheran missionaries were sent after 1981 to Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe, Kenya, a Christian boarding school designed for the children of foreign missionaries. Most accounts suggest that *Tranovato* was established so missionaries' children would be able to follow the Minnesota school curriculum and be at an appropriate grade level upon returning to the United States. Burgess (1932: 236), however, indicates that missionaries' concerns regarding the influence of non-Christian Malagasy playmates on their children and their worries that their children may contract illnesses from Malagasy children also played a role in its formation.

[53] Some parents who lived in and around Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro saw their children regularly, and, in more rare cases, children lived with their parents while attending the American School.

a recently published memoir, one son of missionaries remembers hearing a pastor refer to leaving children behind at *Tranovato* as "the missionary's Gethsemane" (Braaten 2006:30).

When missionaries use this biblical reference, they paint a vivid and disturbing picture of physical and emotional suffering, comparing their experience to that of Jesus following Judas' betrayal. Gethsemane is a garden near Jerusalem where Jesus prays with the disciples after the Last Supper. According to Luke 22:44, Jesus suffers great pain and "anguish" at Gethsemane. In Matthew 26:38, Jesus foreshadows his crucifixion by implying that he is near death at Gethsemane: "'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me'" (see also Mark 14:32-46; Mark 26:36-50**).** The Gospel of Luke heightens the sense that Judas' betrayal is ultimately a form of bodily suffering that precedes Jesus' physical wounds. Jesus' sweat during his prayer in Gethsemane is likened to "drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:43-44). This blood ultimately atones for human sin and becomes the foundational substance of Christian relatedness, imbibed in the sacrament of communion.

In her conversation with me, Rose pointed out that it was only with the "grace" of God and the related assurance of her and her husband's "spiritual call" that they made it through the suffering of leave-taking with their four children. This narrative in many respects parallels the biblical account of Jesus' suffering at Gethsemane and subsequent atonement for human sin in his crucifixion. The comparison intimates that leave-taking is an embodied place of suffering that missionaries occupy, as Jesus did in the garden at Gethsemane. But it also points to the subtle way in which kinship ties betray one, like Judas, and make missionaries vulnerable to suffering. One tension of kinship among

American Lutheran missionaries is that the spiritual call, as Rose implied, both lays the groundwork for and makes it possible to get through this "betrayal."

By likening parent-child leave-taking to Jesus' suffering at Gethsemane, missionaries suggest they understand the pain of separation to be a more global form of Christian suffering that partly stems from Judas' betrayal. They link the suffering of kinship closely to the ultimate evangelistic purpose of their work. Put another way, it is within the most intimate kinship relations that they fully understand the pivotal act of sacrifice that propels their work, placing their suffering within a Christian hierarchy of sacrifice. Judas' betrayal extends to fallen humanity, which may be seen as responsible for the deeper separation and suffering experienced in each moment of leave-taking between missionary parents and their children.

In his historical research on Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries in German East Africa from 1876 to 1914, Beidelman (1999) found that early male and female missionaries linked their everyday labor closely to the experience of suffering. The CMS constituted an "evangelical branch" of the Church of England (Anglican) and the mission positioned the born-again experience as a rite of passage that prepared one for mission work, permitting non-clergy to evangelize and perform other duties often restricted to those with theological training (116-117). While the CMS differed from other mission societies of the time in its structural, doctrinal, and theological policies, Beidelman points out that the valorization of suffering was a widely-disseminated colonial missionary trope that surpassed many of these distinctions.

Deceased missionary children and spouses were considered martyrs in CMS publications, which in turn supported the underlying idea that, with sacrifice, comes

spiritual renewal (Beidelman 1999: 118-119). Resilience in the face of death, suffering, and other trials thereby justified the mission cause. Beidelman notes, citing Cust (1892: 16017): "Missionaries were praised 'who have not preferred the ties of blood or the claims of the family to work'" (119). The contradictory logic inherent in this view was the notion that CMS foreign missionaries *should* have families, since missionaries could project the "Christian life in the family" as a model to emulate in Ukaguru, now east-central Tanzania (120). Beidelman infers that, as the latter model came to hold more importance for the CMS in Ukaguru, the mission's early discourse on the martyrdom of its employees grew less prominent.

Beidelman's account offers several points of comparison to the experiences of American Lutheran missionaries in Madagascar. Despite holding the ideal of the Christian home as a tool for evangelizing and Christianizing the Kuguru population, CMS missionaries often sent their young children to Britain for education at a boarding school. "Consequently," Beidelman writes, "it was never likely for Kuguru to see a missionary family involved in childcare" (1999: 125). While American Lutheran missionaries sent their children to a boarding school like those of the CMS, the school had been established in southeast Madagascar, rather than in their home country, and this enabled American Lutherans to participate more fully in the raising and education of their children. Still, for many, large periods of time existed during the year when school-age children remained absent from their parent's houses.

Secondly, CMS missionary women, like many American Lutheran missionaries, hired Kuguru servants to collect and prepare food for them. Most American Lutheran missionaries who lived in rural villages relied heavily upon Malagasy employees for the

everyday operation of their houses, from cleaning, home repair, and childcare to the slaughtering of chicken, food processing, and bartering for food products at the local market. Some people pointed out to me that the number of the household's employees frequently depended upon whether a woman grew up on a farm in the Midwest and had some familiarity with handling animal products (especially processing slaughtered animals for meat). Missionary women, with some assistance from their husbands, completed or supervised the bulk of these tasks.

Consuming Difference through Food and Eating in Remembered Domestic Spaces

American missionary families typically had a Malagasy cook, nanny for the small children, and sometimes other house staff. One missionary family whose story was recently written in a memoir, the Olsons, engaged in shared worship services and daily tasks like church construction, market trips, and church fund-raising sales with Malagasy Christians in the surrounding community. During gatherings with Norwegian and Norwegian-American missionaries, however, Mahafaly Malagasy appear most in the memoir's narrative as food producers but not food consumers. Eating practices appear as one way that missionaries marked their distinctiveness from Malagasy persons: American Lutheran missionary women tended to prepare - and often instruct Malagasy cooks to furnish - Midwestern American fare and voluminous sweets like sugar cookies (Helland Papers and Stolee Papers).

In one 1964 letter to kin relations and congregants in the U.S., reproduced in the Olsen memoir, Astrid Olsen recounts her work with two other missionary women to make the Norwegian foods *lefse* (a thin potato flatbread), *krumkaka* (a cone-

shaped, rolled, thin cookie usually made on a special iron), and *sandbakkelse* (Norwegian, lit. "sand tart," an almond-flavored sugar cookie) using supplies from the local market, with the aid of *lefse* mixes brought with her from Minnesota**.** Such "memoirs of eating" attest to letter/memoir readers how industrious missionary women upheld Norwegian traditions of food preparation in the mission field. [54] In addition to the written recollection, we might consider the eating itself as an embodied narrative of belonging and difference. As decidedly "Norwegian foods," the material forms of *lefse*, *krumkaka*, and *sandbakkelse* are ethnicized provisions that become part of and contribute to the growth of persons, affirming not only what is today called the "missionary family" but also enacting ethnic difference of Norwegian-American and Norwegian missionaries in Madagascar.

In missionary teacher Emily Helland's 1936 diary, the abundance of food and the robust quality of missionaries' meals in Manasoa is palpable when contrasted to the writer's mention of Malagasy students in the church school who appear at the mission house door to request rice.[55] On June 4, 1936, Helland, a choir leader and missionary

[54] In using the term "memoirs of eating," Sallie Han brought my attention to the multi-layered narratives involved with recalling instances of food production and consumption.

[55] Martha Stolee and the Rev. Michael J. Stolee, who were missionaries in Fort Dauphin from 1900 to 1909, traveled to Madagascar in 1938 for the 50th anniversary celebration of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. On June 17, 1938, Martha Stolee reports in her diary having a "big dinner" in Tranoroa, replete with "soup, coffee, cake, and rice, fried eggs, roast fillet and curried chicken for the main course." A few weeks later on July 8, in Manambaro, she describes an afternoon coffee with "*krumkaker* and cookies" during a visit with another missionary couple (Martha Stolee Papers). In the context of the full diaries of Martha Stolee and Emily Helland, these examples are not unusual, but depict the diet described through their daily entries. Additionally, the diary of medical doctor J.O. Dyrnes, who lived and worked near Manasoa in the southwest, points to the availability and consumption of chicken meat and chicken products among mid-twentieth century missionaries. Dyrnes occasionally kept a record of his diet for the purposes of monitoring his diabetes as an elderly man. On March 31, 1942, Dyrnes noted in his diary in Norwegian: "…I have kept to my regimen [diet]. Breakfast one egg. Coffee with thick cream and rather no milk. Dinner about 40gr fried chicken with manioc and soft boiled rice, hardly ever bread or plain rice but fruit as desired and an hour later a cup of coffee with cream. For supper two eggs, if I have them, or one egg and a small piece of chicken meat and fruit. I often drink water with fresh orange juice in it. One cup of tea in the morning and another in the evening" (Dyrnes Papers).

teacher, records the dinner menu of a gathering with her husband the Rev. Melvin Helland and the Lutheran medical doctor J.O Dyrnes and his wife Sarah Dyrnes. The dinner includes “chicken pie and scalloped potatoes, black currant and vanilla jelly with real cream and doughnuts, from Sister Milla [Pederson], and then tea and sour cream cake with white coconut frosting. We also had some Tulear candy.” On Monday, June 8, 1936, Helland describes an afternoon coffee with “cheese sandwiches, cake, frosted cookies and doughnuts [brought by Milla Pederson]” (Emily Helland Papers). While rice formed one method of payment for mission employees and constituted an institutional allowance at many schools, these arrangements built upon the unequal access to food that obtained between most American missionaries and neighboring Malagasy Lutherans. These accounts also indicate that early and mid-twentieth century missionaries used food, eating, and dinner gatherings among themselves to enact their class and ethnic difference in southern Madagascar.

In my fieldwork, I noticed that food was a lingering image of inequality in spoken narrative memories, which was sometimes difficult to reconcile with the commensality of the altar table. One recent seminary graduate named Emily recalled her mother struggling to “live simply” in Bekily and Antsirabe, Madagascar between 1978 and 1989 while providing adequate sustenance for her growing children. Emily contrasted her parents’ approach to being missionaries in southern Madagascar with that of a family of neighboring American Pentecostals whom she remembered living in a “big house” with several servants and not noticeably altering their consumption practices. She explained the inequalities she observed in food consumption as a child as part of the world’s “brokenness.”

When she used this term, Emily referenced a contemporary Christian theological perspective and discourse concerning the human genealogy that stems from original sin. The term attributes contemporary socio-economic inequalities to the genealogy of sin in relationships among people and infers that the healing qualities of Jesus Christ alone will repair and justify human sinfulness. The concept of brokenness suggests that some human sin, though not all of its legacy, may be systemically repaired by the acceptance of Christ and through a Christ-like lifestyle surrounding the practice of one's faith.[56] With recourse to original sin, Emily made the relational disparities she identified essentially historical and religious ones, which could be addressed predominantly through Christianity. She asserted that each person carried these disparities *in* themselves as a binding legacy and imbibed them in the sacrament of communion.

At the same time, Emily made the point that not everyone recognized the practical implications of the legacy nor the way they may be living it. She couched her criticism of other missionary families by noting that from her perspective there were "different ways of being American" in Madagascar. Her critique of the American Pentecostal family, then, drew from the sectarian politics of Christianity in the United States and, perhaps more subtly, the often-contentious allegations of hypocrisy that Christians use to monitor each other's moral behavior. Emily suggested that the "different ways of being American" she observed in Madagascar couldn't be separated from specific practices of food consumption in domestic spaces.

[56] One archival assistant at the Luther Theological Seminary, a seminarian himself, explained to me that the term "brokenness" has come to signify original sin and the implications of original sin in the world. As he noted, "lefties" often use the term to talk about social justice and socio-economic inequalities. The "brokenness" of the world described to me in interviews, he believed, was a way to index original sin without smuggling in all of the baggage and preconceptions people may have surrounding the word "sin," particularly those concerning sex and the body.

What one might call the "violence" of food inequalities crept into the accounts that missionaries gave of their everyday life in southern Madagascar, as it intersected the lives of Malagasy neighbors, but rarely did it find any kind of full narrative resolution (cf. Scheper-Hughes 1992). Repeatedly, where it appeared most often was in the idiom and practices of food and eating in domestic spaces. One evening Lynn was explaining to the American volunteers of the medical non-profit Malagasy Partnership why Malagasy people that he knew in the South surrounding Manambaro used recycled materials. Even more prevalent in why people reuse things than a creative effort to recycle is the "desperation" of the people, Lynn said. "The potato peels don't hit the ground, we would say … People would grab them from the garbage pit because they were desperate." This struck me as a particularly disturbing image at the time. Lynn fit a larger discussion about inequality in material welfare into the image of the potato peels floating through space from one hand – discarded as waste – into another. The quick appropriation of the peels, a scrap destined for the "garbage pit," conveyed for Lynn the "desperation" of some Malagasy for sustenance in Manambaro, where he lived with his family. Lynn's comment implicitly constructed his family's greater access to food in contrast to some Malagasy neighbors, as well as the fact that he and his family did not consume the potato peels and left behind these edible items.

Missionary narratives of food and eating constitute a kind of moral imagining of the fundamental ways that people are obligated and bound to each other, whether through shared space, conversation, the ritual of communion, or exchange. American Lutheran missionaries undoubtedly engage in this process from a privileged position of plenty, something acknowledged in their stories but also which makes possible a distanced view

of suffering. For example, Lynn's narrative image created a sharp contrast to the table before us at Malagasy Partnership, where a bucket of peanuts sat virtually untouched and the refrigerator stood a few feet away stocked full of sugary soda pop. The spoken image of the potato peels gained some of its narrative power through this contrast, drawing upon the specific context of its telling.

What was notable in this case is that Lynn brought these narrative remembrances of food and eating into the non-profit organization. He linked the space of the evening's meeting to the domestic practices of his family in southern Madagascar, perhaps constructing the non-profit as house-like in the process. But perhaps more fundamentally, he brought into the headquarters of the NGO the crucial *relationship* among or between houses of American Lutherans and their Malagasy neighbors in southern Madagascar. At the Malagasy Partnership table, he made visible the unseen or forgotten disparity in the relations of these house inhabitants. By placing himself narratively in the domestic spaces he once inhabited in southern Madagascar, Lynn showed the close physical proximity of American Lutherans and their Malagasy neighbors (i.e., through the movement of the potato peels), but used this image to suggest a greater moral and material divide that existed between "houses." At Malagasy Partnership, this story reinforced the organizational mission of bridging the divide between "houses of God," or distinct churches, and "walking in partnership" with Malagasy Lutherans, which Lynn teaches to the other volunteers.

Lynn's narrative brings me to a final point that I wish to make concerning missionary remembrances of life in domestic spaces of southern Madagascar. Missionaries and their families in Minneapolis/St. Paul use these narratives to accomplish

particular aims in their contemporary lives; the stories, as I have shown in Lynn's case, draw their efficacy from the specific space and time of their telling. In her ethnography *The Architecture of Memory*, Joëlle Bahloul (1996) argues that the shaping and ordering of narrative memory is the primary means of generating and maintaining relatedness among the diasporic Senoussis family. She writes, "Memory has stored [the physical objects from Setifian domestic life] in its oral archives, as if their materiality could exist only in remembrance. Domestic space and objects are more important for their symbolic rather than for their practical function" (129). Bahloul does suggest that the narrative memory of life in Dar-Refayil is built through and in relation to the "present" lives of the former Dar-Refayil residents, though she does not delve deeply into each person's current circumstances. What is the role of the "symbolic images" of domestic spaces in the daily lives of former Dar-Refayil residents?

Since leaving Setif, Bahloul notes that the Senoussis have been physically separated from Dar-Refayil and unable to relate in a "concrete" sensory way to that domestic space. Yet the domestic spaces they inhabited during the time of Bahloul's study – and the daily sensory experiences related to these spaces – undoubtedly contributed to and maintained their remembrances of Dar-Refayil. Through my own research, I noticed that missionaries placed within their Minnesota houses significant displays of Malagasy keepsakes. They inhabit these domestic spaces on a daily basis and use them to communicate specific stories about their social relationships in southern Madagascar, as well as to reveal certain qualities of their personhood. As a formative and embodied social practice, rather than a series of stationary objects, I argue that home

displays share a dynamic interrelationship with acts of remembering that take a verbal or written form.

Figure 3.1. The mission station house in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro circa 1910, as represented on a color-tinted photo postcard of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. The house was among those prefabricated in Norway and transported aboard the Norwegian Missionary Society ship Paulus to Madagascar's east coast.

Figure 3.2. The Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro port

Figure 3.3. The former Missionary Children's Home, or Tranovato. Today the building houses an independently owned café and hotel (Hotely Mahavoky).

Figure 3.4. The Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro Lutheran church, as seen through the window of the former Missionary Children's Home or *Tranovato*. The church was rebuilt in 1950 after a cyclone damaged the original structure.

Making Madagascar Visible in Minnesota Home Displays

Many missionaries' contemporary house spaces in the Upper Midwest present Madagascar as an object of devotion, narrate the relationship of American Lutherans and Malagasy people, and supply a visual exposition of "Malagasy culture." Visual narratives take shape through the placement, sequence, and object biography of painted Malagasy village scenes, batiks, and carved wooden small-scale statuettes, reliefs, and tables. Removed from the initial contexts of their production, these materials serve

predominantly as items of display and as springs of knowledge concerning the house inhabitants and their relationship with Malagasy persons. Their placement atop coffee tables, adorning living room and dining room walls, and inside bookcases accentuates their display status and draws upon social conventions for the domestic presentation of collectibles and valued art objects. Located frequently in close proximity to family photographs, world maps, framed prayers in Norwegian, *rosmaling* painted designs, and Hardanger embroidery, the spatial alignment strives to bring together spiritual, ethnic-religious, and familial genealogies into a single visual field.

The visual appearance of assembled material tokens of southern Madagascar additionally plays a critical didactic function among missionaries and their children. As I discuss further below, rather than being taken as tokens of a *past*, the material objects and images found in missionary homes must be examined with an eye to what material qualities people imbue with value in contemporary social relations. I suggest home displays enable missionaries to fulfill part of their original "call" to mission work and the lifelong covenant of the missionary vocation: the duty of being a cultural interpreter. In the ways they are socially elaborated, home displays share a relationship with other genres of missionary communication, such as the presentations missionaries gave during deputation work in Midwest churches and the regular letters they consistently wrote home to congregants who were supporting their work.

Most Malagasy keepsakes appear in the relatively "public" space of the living room, the place often designated for entertaining visitors, gathering together, and conversing. With a few exceptions, people never invited me to the most interior, "private" spaces of the house, such as the bedroom, which would have been viewed as a

socially inappropriate gesture. My evidence necessarily reflects the conventions of space use for guests, since I spent most of my time in the living room, dining room, and kitchen of missionary homes. This tendency parallels the pattern of space use that was observed by David Morgan (1998) in his study of visual piety among American Protestants. Religious images were frequently displayed with family photographs in hallways and living rooms as a way "to stress the religious basis of family identity over many generations" (160). Morgan concluded that one essential role of devotional images was to communicate and project a coherent, oftentimes idyllic, visual narrative of family life (167). As the "heart of the home," the living room often featured the most valued devotional images, ones that had been passed through the generations in a family or given as wedding gifts, at first communion, or in leave-taking (165).[57]

While displays constitute a prominent feature of many contemporary missionary living rooms, the act of collecting and acquiring material items from Madagascar for domestic presentation is in no way new to American Lutheran missionaries. During travel to Antananarivo from the area of Mahafaly in the southwest, missionary doctor J.O. Dyrnes reported in his diary on September 25, 1913 that he was "buying Malagasy things, birds made from cow horn and painted pictures for 84 francs" while he visited a market in the capital (Norwegian, *Brugte hele formiddagen til indkjob af Gassiske sager. Jeg kjobte horn-fugle og Billeder for 84*[00.)] (Dyrnes Papers). It is likely the practice of acquiring items for gift-giving or for home display upon retirement in the Midwest was

[57] With a total of 531 respondents, Morgan (1998: 211, 159) found that 39% displayed religious images in the bedroom, 38% in the living room, 12% in the dining room, and 11% in the entrance of the house. Forty percent of his respondents lived in one of twelve Midwestern states (Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas).

even older.[58] Judging by the common appearance of certain categories of objects in their homes (including "birds made from cow horn"), missionaries may also have advised their successors on where to shop for collectibles, which crafters to frequent, and what items made the best gifts or were most easily transported over long distances.

Bringing Norway and Madagascar into a Single Visual Field

Certain objects and images became familiar sights to me in missionary homes: paintings by Malagasy nationalist artist Émile Ralambo, batiks, and cattle horn figures. Another common feature of missionary homes was a cinnamon brown-stained wood table, tray, or circular platter with an intricate, "pineapple-shaped" engraving technique on its surface. In the St. Paul condominium living room of Hank and Patricia four plate-shaped wood pieces adorned the walls. As I heard from others, Hank explained these were carvings by one of the most preeminent wood carvers in Madagascar; the pieces employed Norwegian carving techniques, he specified, like the delicately inscribed "pineapple" pattern, that Hank believed had been taught to Malagasy people by Norwegian missionaries. Hank said that he bought many pieces from the Malagasy carver, which he then gave or sold to other missionaries. With many of their Malagasy keepsakes, Hank noted they have had to buy six of everything: one for each child.

The specialized knowledge generally accompanying the wooden carvings became a point of revelation: as the story was told, something presumed to be distinctly Malagasy upon first glance was in actuality rooted in a Norwegian tradition of wood-working. A

[58] For generations, American missionaries also supplied ethnological and natural history collections at museums in the United States and England, removing many items of "cultural heritage" from Madagascar before it was prohibited by international law. The most common collectible was the egg of the aepyornis, an extinct species that is believed to have once been a giant flightless bird resembling an ostrich.

comparable narrative structure of revelation resurfaced in other stories that linked Norwegians to Malagasy life. One story I was told traced the *fifohazana* (awakening or revival) movement in Madagascar to the supplications of a Norwegian woman, who prayed that spiritual renewal would occur in Madagascar on the night of October 15, 1894. In some versions of the story, the woman is described as a relative of Hans Nielson Hauge, the eighteenth-century Norwegian lay reformer. The story suggests the Holy Spirit moved from the Norwegian Haugean revival to the *fifohazana* movement in Madagascar, which originated with Betsileo *mpisikidy* (diviner) Dada Rainisoalambo in 1894. I discuss the significance of the *fifohazana* movement for lifelong missionaries in the next chapter.

The prayer or work of Malagasy persons, however, occupied little agentive role in both accounts, which channeled the most commanding divine intercession and innovation through Norway and Norwegian persons. In his discussion of the material culture of Christian missions, Thomas (1991:163) observes that a style may become a "retrospective construction" of a particular material form and be seen as "locally distinctive or as resonant of national character." Among missionaries and their children, the carving style of the wooden plates has in some ways become emblematic of hidden, unseen connections between Norway and Madagascar. The shared knowledge of these connections, suggestive of a divine plan or the divine order of things, reinforces the spiritual and ethnic-religious ties among missionaries and their relations.

These connections were made visually explicit through the placement and proximity of Malagasy and Norwegian keepsakes in many missionary homes. Although not all missionaries to Madagascar claim Norwegian descent, the majority voluntarily

self-identify as Norwegian or Scandinavian, depending upon their interlocutor. One son of missionaries, a medical doctor, told me that with three of four grandparents from Norway he was taught several prayers in Norwegian as a child. One framed Norwegian prayer was hung on the wall of his kitchen beside a *Rosmaling*-design plate and "pineapple-inlay" wooden tray. Featuring wide brushstrokes of brightly colored floral scenes, *Rosmaling* design (Norwegian, lit., rose/flower painting) is a Norwegian craft tradition practiced and displayed among Norwegian-Americans in the Upper Midwest. Along with Hardanger needlework, an embroidery technique named for a region of Norway, the two crafts are customary features of many Scandinavian-American kitchens, dining rooms, and living rooms in the Upper Midwest.

With the close proximity of items socially recognized as Norwegian, materials acquired in Madagascar, and family photographs, wall arrangements visually sutured together Norway and Madagascar as the geographic anchors of a family epic spanning several continents. Family photographs often covered the walls of hallway corridors, linking the bedroom and the living room. By affixing, observing, and talking about their home displays of Madagascar, many people participated in a process of fashioning identity in which Lutheranism and Norwegian ethnicity formed central and inseparable dimensions. They inhabited spaces on a daily basis where these dimensions of their personhood were visibly constructed and reinforced through discussions with guests and visiting family members.

During the spring of 2005, I visited one retired missionary couple for a weekend stay at their house in rural northwest Minnesota, near the Minnesota-South Dakota border. Margaret, an energetic, sharp woman with a youthful countenance, and Peter, a

soft-spoken Lutheran pastor with a shock of white, whispy hair, lived in southeast Madagascar between 1959 and 1987. Their Minnesota lake cottage, purchased prior to retirement and now rebuilt as a year-round house, shared property with the house of the couple's son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren, which was visible across a short stretch of grass. A wall of windows in the living room faced the placid dark blue water of Crane Lake, which my hosts half-jokingly likened to the view from Madagascar's southeast coast. The house featured Malagasy paintings, cattle horn carvings, wooden inlay tables, batiks, and maps in nearly every room. Framed family photographs lined the entire wall of a hallway near the front foyer of the house. A cut-out plaque with the inscribed adage "Let me tell you about my grandchildren…" contextualized the photographic display.

At my request, Margaret and Peter gave me a tour of the living room, where most of their Malagasy keepsakes were gathered. One painting was hung on a living room wall beside a window looking onto their son and daughter-in-law's house. Peter explained that the painting, by the famed Malagasy artist Émile Ralambo (1879-1963), had been purchased from Ralambo himself when he was an elderly man. Ralambo had summoned Margaret and Peter to the capital city and showed them a collection of pieces he wished missionaries to have.[59] The piece before us featured a Malagasy house set against a bright blue sky and five women working together with two children outside its structure. The painting seemed to recall the time when the family was living in Madagascar, when Margaret and Peter's children were small, since one could look simultaneously at the painting with its playing children and at their now-adult son's house through the adjacent window.

[59] Peter noted that he brought the Ralambo painting to the United States before the removal of these paintings from Madagascar was prohibited by law.

Beside the window overlooking their son and daughter-in-law's house and underneath the Ralambo painting was a tall-backed Malagasy wooden chair, which Margaret demonstrated had to be sat in carefully so as not to tip the small seat. The chair was adorned with a few minute, interlaced engravings, including one on the tall back. Margaret and Peter noted this design method had been taught to Malagasy carvers by Norwegian missionaries. A coffee table, underneath the window looking out to the lake, had an empty inside case that had been filled with seashells from the beaches on the southeast coast and covered with a glass top. In the center of the living room, in front of the sofa, was a second coffee table. On the table sat a small-scale statuette, a favorite of Margaret, which represented a woman leaning forward on her foot (an active pose) and balancing or placing a water pot on her knee. (See Figure 3.5)

Margaret and Peter had studied the production techniques of many of the keepsakes, particularly the batiks and the cattle horn carvings, and they explained the methods of their production as we walked through their living room. But rather than focusing predominantly on the tangibility, materiality, or scale of the keepsakes per se, they primarily drew my attention through the images and material forms to certain telling details of Malagasy life, using them as didactic tools. While I was leaving the house at the end of the weekend, preparing to give Margaret a ride back to Minneapolis where her daughter lived, she handed me one of their small carved, wooden figurines from Madagascar. The stained carving represented a woman carrying a water pot atop her head, her legs affixed to the sculpture base in active mid-stride. As Margaret placed the figurine in my hand, she told me she wanted me to have it. She said she hoped that it

would remind me to be thankful for running water from a tap and that I didn't have to walk several kilometers to collect the water I needed each day.

Throughout the weekend, Margaret peppered our conversations with criticisms of American consumerism and waste. With her gift of the wooden figurine, she communicated the lesson through another medium, supplying the verbal explanation in an effort to secure the interpretation I might take away from the material form. Additionally, she hoped that the figurine would lodge the lesson in my memory (reminding me to be thankful), continually bringing it back into my daily life over time. She and her husband also educated me through the spaces of their house, as they elaborated them. The house, they explained, is a testament to the way Malagasy people they knew found secondary uses for spare parts and recycled materials.

Margaret and Peter have gradually added on to the original structure, creating a second story and more rooms on the first floor. The bedroom where I slept was created from the wood of a horse barn that was being torn down in the surrounding countryside. Hearing of this and knowing the wood was only a few years old and in good shape, they purchased it and incorporated it into their house. Though he teasingly referred to the work of a missionary pastor as “work with my mouth instead of my back,” Peter admitted to being known in the mission as a “jack of all trades.” Peter said his youth on a farm in northwest Minnesota that had no electricity until after World War II and his knowledge of agriculture helped him relate to the way of life in southeast Madagascar. He would use spare parts and materials to make things, work on construction, and spend considerable time talking with local farmers around Antanimora and Behara, where he and Margaret were stationed.

Figure 3.5. Small-scale statuette on Peter and Margaret's coffee table, surrounded by videotapes from a recent Madagascar trip.

Figure 3.6. One wall of the living room, including a line drawing of Jesus, wrought iron silhouettes of Malagasy figures, family photographs, and a framed biblical passage.

Figure 3.7. A bedroom wall in Margaret and Peter's house featuring a wooden carving hung above an ornamental baobab tree.

Figure 3.8. A batik and carved wooden spoon

Home Displays and the Missionary Vocation

The visual lessons of contemporary living rooms correspond with the communication practices by which Lutheran missionaries represented the "mission field" to laypeople in the Midwest United States. While on two-year or one-year furloughs from their mission fields, American Lutheran missionaries performed what was known as "deputational work." During the furlough or leave period, they traveled to Lutheran congregations and mission prayer organizations in the Midwest United States. At each meeting, they gave firsthand accounts of their work to congregants, acknowledged past financial support and requested funds for future work, and told stories from the "mission field." Taking place in church classrooms, these presentations used slides, maps, artifacts, and films as instructional tools and rhetorical devices.

Despite the prohibition against using images as icons, visual materials have long played a substantial role in American Protestant education. The key to their use, according to Morgan (1998), was the valued role they played in condensing text for the purposes of memorization. Select images, acting as "memory devices," were closely linked to and legitimated through the importance of remembering in religious instruction and retrospection. For instance, the *Hieroglyphic Bible,* which remained popular in the United States into the early twentieth century, included "pictorial primers" that assisted children who were learning to read and "supported the precise memorization of Scripture" (Morgan 1998: 184). Images in Bibles acted as "visual summaries" of specific biblical passages that children (and adults) were expected to commit to memory. Morgan notes, "Memory was a place to store the 'bread of God' for later use, and images were the means of installing it there" (184). From this perspective, images were to be taken as iconic signs of text. Memory became a room that could be filled with such iconic signs,

and the image was its door key. By constructing the instrumental function of the image *in* memory over time and erasing its poetic, rhetorical, or other features, educators avoided the fallacious identification of the image as an icon.

In deputation work, the rhetorical success of presentations could be gauged by how well congregants "remembered" Madagascar in their prayers and tithing. Visual images formed part of a broader semiotic process of shaping the "memory," which could be effected through an interwoven selection of evocative words, images, and narrative frames. To train the memory, missionaries often used repetition, alliteration, a familiar narrative structure, and summary points in their verbal and written exposition, all presentation features that could aid one's recall at a future time. "Remembering" was an active acknowledgement of personal responsibility for God's work in Madagascar, as it had been recounted through human interest stories, photographs, films, and artifacts. As one circulated church pamphlet charged below a photograph of two Malagasy babies on its yellow-orange cover, "Consider Africa. Remember Madagascar." (Mission Literature n.d.).

Many missionaries told me of their disappointment upon returning to the United States because it appeared to them that few Midwesterners *had* remembered Madagascar. Fellow congregants seldom wanted to hear stories of their experiences in the country. Margaret told me that people's time-keeping was distressing to her after returning to Minnesota, even with her family: people would look at their watches and dash off somewhere almost immediately after arriving at the house or just beginning a conversation. It seemed they had no time to talk.

After returning from our three-week trip to Madagascar, Hank expressed some lingering concerns to me when we talked during a house visit months later. He rehearsed several experiences from the trip, now encapsulated as specific stories I heard on at least one other occasion. As Hank put it, his daughter-in-law Andrea suffered from "culture shock" as the group traveled and expressed great distress at the "conditions of poverty" she witnessed in and around Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro. Hank said that for him Andrea's experience formed a much bigger question about the ability of missionaries to communicate the experience and conditions of life in Madagascar to Americans: "What did we do wrong?," Hank asked several times. "We tell stories about Madagascar all the time. It was surprising to see that even within our own family, someone didn't understand. We haven't done enough to explain the culture," he concluded.

Hank appeared to see Andrea as emblematic of a misunderstanding American Lutheran public. He interpreted his daughter-in-law's reaction to the places of southeast Madagascar as a failure of missionary communication. Even though it was her first trip to the country, she grew up in an American Lutheran congregation in northern Wisconsin where missionaries had often given deputation presentations about Madagascar. Furthermore, as Hank pointed out to me several times, my grandfather baptized his daughter-in-law when he served as the Lutheran pastor of her home congregation, implicating me in the problem before us through my kinship relations. Since their time in Madagascar overlapped by four years, Hank knew that my grandfather had been appointed to the Wisconsin congregation following almost thirty years of living in southeast Madagascar (1932-1961) and that he had talked with the congregants about his time in Madagascar.

What helped Hank interpret the perceived lack of understanding within his own family was a comment he heard years earlier from another missionary's mother, who visited her daughter's family in Madagascar for an extended period of time. "I've listened to all the furlough presentations, seen the slides and read the letters," she said, as he reported, "but nothing could have prepared me for actually being here." Nonetheless, for Hank, Andrea's experience made him reevaluate part of what he saw as the duty of a missionary: to communicate the experience of a place. He began to view the work of his contemporaries as insufficient ("we haven't done enough") and inferred that missionary communications were more prone to misunderstanding than he previously may have thought.

Hank's point may have also built upon the knowledge that missionaries of his generation received fewer opportunities over time to communicate directly with American congregants in the Midwest. In the early 1970s, the American Lutheran Church (now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) shortened the "furlough" or leave period from one year to three months for foreign missionaries, which gave them less time in the United States to gain support for their work in deputation presentations. Some argue the church responded to lagging support for foreign missions (in financial, social, and theological terms) among American Lutherans by reducing the furlough period and the number of long-term foreign missionaries. Others suggest the changing policies resulted from a marginal but powerful opposition to foreign missions in the American Lutheran Church. From this perspective, the new policy of three-month leave periods contributed to the decline in support for foreign missions in the American Lutheran

Church, as well as congregants' increasingly distant and dated understanding of the work of foreign missionaries.

Home displays endeavored in part to fulfill the missionary duty of "explaining a culture," as Hank had phrased it. In my conversations with missionaries and their families, culture formed part of a native taxonomy that tacitly divided culture from religion. While people often spoke of "culture," they did not tend to use the word "religion" to describe their own practices of faith nor those of others. For some, it was a negative term that could make faith appear too linked to human institutions and too impersonal. Culture could have a positive or negative influence upon religious understanding, but it was viewed for the most part as a morally positive thing.

During my weekend stay at her house, Margaret criticized previous "colonial missionaries" for not "respecting Malagasy culture" as something distinct in its own right. Although many missionaries evoked "Malagasy culture" as a unitary category, they frequently suggested ways that such an understanding was untenable in practice. Most identified with Tanosy, Tandroy, and Mahafaly people of the South with whom they lived for years and quickly pointed out historical, linguistic, and other differences among these "ethnicities" and Merina and Betsileo people of the highlands. Many were avid historians of Madagascar and voraciously read accounts of the original peopling of the island, which tended to indicate that people had arrived in Madagascar from a set of disparate locations.

While regional and ethnic differences were often noted, some missionaries used the term "Malagasy culture" and evoked it in conversation to signal the value and importance of Malagasy practices in their eyes, in contrast to their predecessors.

Acknowledging “Malagasy culture,” for Margaret, reflected a positive generational shift in missionary training and philosophy. Margaret explained to me that the early missionaries thought they needed to change Malagasy people. “This was the wrong mindset,” she said. “Missionaries are there to help the Lord open people’s hearts. The Lord changes people’s hearts, and the missionaries should not attempt to change people’s ways. Culture is not what makes someone a Christian.”

The false association Margaret identified between cultural practices and Christianity could appear easily resolved in conversation but has formed an underlying and oftentimes thorny problem for Christian missionaries of many different denominations, periods, and localities. By the early twentieth century, Dutch Calvinist missionaries working in Sumba, Indonesia espoused the predominant view that cultures were to be preserved while religion was ultimately in need of change (Keane 2007:106). Missionaries began to believe that, in order to be successful, their evangelism had to introduce Christianity in “cultural” forms (e.g., songs, verbal performances) that would be familiar and understood by Sumbanese people. Keane (2007) points out that the process of incorporating Sumbanese cultural forms into Christian worship was fraught with tension for the Dutch Calvinist mission, since these forms had to be divested of their associations with the local pre-Christian religion and were not to be taken by Sumbanese people as part of it.

For the Dutch Calvinist mission, the separation of religion and culture constituted part of a distinction concerning the proper role of religion in modern society in which the separation of church and state was paramount (Keane 2007:84). Christian evangelism presupposed Christianity as a religion of universal import, which was not confined to a

particular locality. Keane (2007) suggests the association of culture with the particular, "local" way of life in Sumba supported an overriding semiotic ideology among Dutch Calvinist missionaries. Cultural forms, he writes, became "the particular vehicles for universal but abstract meanings – they would be more or less arbitrary signifiers for signifieds of ultimate significance" (112).

Margaret made a comparable distinction when she stated concisely that culture does not "make someone a Christian." Culture in this sense formed the material "vehicle" for the expression of religious change but from her perspective should not be the object of missionary evangelism. She further suggested, however, that former missionaries in Madagascar misrecognized themselves *and* "culture" as primary vehicles of change in mission work. They had not acknowledged the most important, divinely-inspired transformations that occurred unseen and in the space of the "heart." The contemporary recognition and respect of "Malagasy culture" in home displays therefore makes an implicit claim to the independence of Malagasy culture from particular religions practiced in Madagascar. In my visits with missionaries, no one mentioned Madagascar's marked religious pluralism in relation to their home displays nor did they connect a quality of a particular keepsake or image to the practices of Islam, indigenous religions, or Hinduism.

An equally important consideration, therefore, concerns what was not communicated about the keepsakes in my interactions with missionaries and their families. It was notable that no one ever attributed French influence to any painting style, perspective, depiction, or production technique of the material objects and images. The inclusion of work by Malagasy painter Ralambo in many households tacitly

communicates the inhabitants' allegiance to a form of Malagasy nationalism. A Malagasy Christian who established a Baptist church, Ralambo was forced to leave the country temporarily in 1915 due to his involvement in an anti-colonial movement (Larson 1997:986). His paintings often depict rural scenes of Madagascar in romanticist style, which Larson (1997) links to Ralambo's work as a village teacher during the early twentieth century. Perhaps because of Ralambo's subject matter or the primarily rural residences of many missionary families, few of the home displays portray urban, contemporary dwellings or settings in Madagascar.

Additionally, in my presence, people infrequently discussed how Malagasy people viewed the objects they purchased and which now graced their living room walls. While some items were given as gifts, others were purchased at marketplaces throughout the country. My hosts mentioned the commercial acquisition of the keepsakes frequently and without hesitance. Some crafters were preferred among the missionaries and repeatedly visited to purchase the same items. I learned that some items were collected over the course of years in Madagascar, but many were purchased or given as gifts upon leaving the country at retirement, an example of what Morgan (1998: 175) calls a "critical juncture" of leave-taking. With the exception of some Malagasy baskets (*tanty*), most daily-use goods have been recontextualized into display items.

Conclusion

Contemporary home displays in missionary living rooms rebuild part of the moral edifice of the missionary vocation. They strive to educate guests and visitors in the Midwest about the social worlds once-inhabited in missionary story-telling and visual images. In their elaboration of home displays, missionaries aim to lodge Madagascar in

their visitors' "memory," with the hope that these guests recall their moral obligation to the place at a future time. Home displays take seriously the divine call missionaries experienced to travel to Madagascar as young adults. By locating Madagascar *inside* the house, former missionaries recreate the importance of Madagascar in domestic spaces and simultaneously use these displays to construct their personhood and social relationships in Minnesota.

When missionaries and their families today lament the appearance of mission houses, they inherently revisit the practices that have long shaped their vision and understanding of the house. Missionaries suggest that, for them, the mission's former built environment in southern Madagascar forms a dynamic moral interface in their relationship with Malagasy Lutherans. Mission houses form part of a visual perception of the divine and a vital argument for its presence in Madagascar. The sadness that Diane expressed upon the sight of mission houses marks the perception of times-past and mourns the house as a moral edifice of her parents' lifelong work and personhood. The visualized houses, I suggested, recognize the future separations of missionaries and their children, the absence already partially witnessed in the disparity between the remembered house and its observed qualities in return visits. I have indicated that the dynamic qualities of mission houses should be understood through these intergenerational relationships.

In her ethnography of aging in northern India, Sarah Lamb (2000) points out that many anthropological accounts of death have focused more upon funerary rites than the everyday ways that people prepare for, negotiate, and understand their own deaths. In a prayer that he vocalized during a visit in October 2005 to Malagasy Partnership, the

medical non-profit, one missionary pastor Karl stressed the importance of always being "prepared" for the afterlife, a widespread Christian trope. He mentioned death several times, noting that, as the Lord promised, faithful servants would meet the Lord after earthly death or if Jesus were to come again before the death arrived. Karl confirmed: "We are ready to meet you Lord whichever is first." Certainly, missionary elders expressed the ways their bodies or "memory" seemed to occasionally fail them. Karl's wife Astrid remarked to me, following Karl's prayer in the medical non-profit, that the "memories come more slowly now."

But they never questioned their preparedness for death in conversation with me; one's preparedness was synonymous with being a strong Christian and to question it would be to suggest one's faith was waning. On the contrary, many viewed aging as a process of strengthening the faith. Patricia told me that, for her and her husband Hank, "the faith deepens as we age." Karl explained similarly to me, "No matter how old we get, there's a growing of grace that we must be willing to grow in the Scriptures and in the walk with God. Like the story of Enoch in the Old Testament – he walked with God, and people noticed it."

Still, rather than completely sublimate the difficult parting of death, people expressed the pain of loss and bereavement in a language of separation and reunion that they said characterized all missionary kinship relations. None was as vividly expressed as the process of leave-taking between parents and children. In remembering these difficult partings, from the perspective of parent, child, or both, missionaries rehearsed and anticipated future separations and reunions as a practice of understanding death. Remembered leave-takings between parents and children mutually inform Christian

discourses on suffering among American Lutheran missionaries. Through spoken and written narrative memories, missionaries expressed the view that life comprises many small separations and reunions with kin, a commentary on the tests of faith one endures as much as the way these ready one for separations to come. In short, through their narrations, missionaries suggest they live and understand the putatively "religious" experience of death and rebirth in their relationships with their parents and their children.

In her account of the narrative memories of one diasporic Algerian family, Joëlle Bahloul (1996: 9) notes that persons may articulate a "family identity in narrative memory, negotiating time and space" through this process. Bahloul writes, "Remembrance not only aims to reflect the past but also sublimates it. It presents itself as the negotiation or symbolic resolution of the conflicts arising from history and society" (1996: 133). In this chapter I have argued that the house is a dynamic and influential edifice in the lives of former missionaries to Madagascar and their relations. In narrative memories, missionary kinship and the divisions and tensions of kinship practice reside in mission houses across the southern landscape of Madagascar. But rather than providing a "symbolic resolution of conflicts arising from history and society," my informants indicate that they experience and even renew some of these tensions of kinship relations through the remembered and reinhabited domestic spaces of southern Madagascar.

CHAPTER 4:
"WALKING OVER DRY LAND INTO THE NEW": THE POLITICS OF HISTORY, RELIGIOUS IDENTITY, AND THE FIFOHAZANA MOVEMENT OF MADAGASCAR IN MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL

Introduction

In 1984, Hank, then the chairman of the American Lutheran evangelical mission to southern Madagascar, made a striking historical comparison between his missionary colleagues and the people of Israel standing before the waters of the Red Sea. The message was clear, he wrote, echoing Moses, that missionaries should not be fearful in "looking back" to the past but should use the past "in walking over dry land into the new" (ALMF Blue Book 1984). The turning point Hank perceived at the time in Madagascar concerned the rapid growth of non-denominational varieties of Christianity in the country, as well as the national expansion of the *fifohazana* (awakening, revival) movement that had long occupied an ambivalent position in relation to the Malagasy Lutheran Church (*Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy*, FLM). Writing to fellow American missionaries in a circulated report, he encouraged them to embrace these Christian movements as "the miracle just ahead for us to enter," an unknown yet divinely planned future like that faced by ancient Israelites in their exodus from Egypt (ALMF Blue Book 1984). While the comparison conveyed a prescient and assured way forward, Hank's poetic analogy prompts several questions: Why had American Lutheran missionaries

been “in exile” in the first place? And how specifically would the past provide continuity, or “dry land,” between each missionary reader and the promised future?

This chapter addresses how people create multiple points of temporal continuity in the face of religious movements that emphasize moments of discontinuity and disjuncture. Hank knew as he wrote to his missionary colleagues that the American Lutheran mission, as he once knew it, was ending. The American Lutheran Church cut missionary personnel in Madagascar throughout the 1970s and 1980s. It was not only a time of marked transformation for Christianity in Madagascar, but also for American Lutheranism. For retired lifelong missionaries now living in Minneapolis/St. Paul, the *fifohazana* movement became the piece of “dry land” that Hank identified: a harbinger of the changing perspective from a regional to a national church, from a missionary to a Malagasy church, and from a politically marginal to a politically central movement within Madagascar. In this chapter, I suggest that, just as involvement in the *fifohazana* demands of its adherents a new orientation to time, contemporary reports and stories of the *fifohazana* movement play a critical role in reorienting the past of missionary involvement in southern Madagascar.

By aligning themselves with the *fifohazana*, retired missionaries partly responded to criticisms of mission work that emerged in the ALC/ELCA as the church decreased funding for foreign missionaries in Madagascar in the 1980s and placed greater emphasis on supporting nationally-led evangelism. Missionaries, more than other figures, became associated in the ELCA with the problems of American imperialism and racial inequality that the church explicitly sought to address by changing its policy on global mission work (Global Mission in the 21st Century 1999). Over the first three months of my fieldwork, I

gradually noticed that the missionaries I knew sometimes associated their missionary predecessors with an abstracted past by labeling them as "colonial missionaries" and as those of "colonial days," thereby distancing themselves from postcolonial critiques of mission work. By segmenting time, they were able to communicate an important measure of social and ideological distance between themselves and their predecessors. In the process of reincorporating themselves into a successful and equitable mission past, I suggest one place that many former American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar look is the *fifohazana* (awakening, revival) movement. *Fifohazana* stories enable missionaries to construct their religious identity in terms other than those dominantly ascribed by the church institution (ALC/ELCA) with which they have long been affiliated.

Even as missionaries may identify with the *fifohazana* as a Malagasy Christian movement and use it to reorient the missionary past, these points of continuity implicate further contradictory orientations. What was not often mentioned in missionary social gatherings was the fact that the *fifohazana* as it is now understood was opposed by some of the early authorities of the mission and the elders' predecessors, including in some cases their parents. While distancing themselves from predecessors that disapproved of the *fifohazana*, missionaries also develop particular narratives that reincorporate their ancestors into an historical progression that culminates in the national prominence of the *fifohazana* in Madagascar. Although *fifohazana* adherents and former missionaries may invoke the discontinuity of their faith with coexistent "local" practices - with Malagasy service to the ancestors and the mainline American Lutheran church (ALC/ELCA) respectively - they concurrently build particular alliances across time and space, ones that

may be "globalizing" in scope (Robbins 2003:224), a point that I take up in the conclusion to this chapter.

In her recent ethnography of Seventh-Day Adventism in the northeast town of Maroantsetra, Madagascar, Keller (2005:54) positions the *fifohazana* movement in the context of a "new wave" of Christianity in Madagascar that includes the rapid growth in several regions of Seventh-Day Adventism and Pentecostalism. While these Christian churches diverge in many respects in worship style, theological tenets, and behavioral restrictions, Keller notes that the churches share an emphasis on the centrality of the Bible and on the "categorical rejection" of communication with the ancestors (54). She writes,

> The claim that the ancestors are categorically 'false' is a radical one in the Malagasy context where the relationship between living and dead kin is of such importance, and where the mainline churches have learnt to coexist with ancestor worship. Such coexistence is emphatically rejected by the New Churches and their converts are continually reminded of this (Keller 2005:54).[60]

Although many Christians and Muslims in Madagascar remain involved with ancestral practices, the *fifohazana* movement seeks to draw adherents away from service to the ancestors, particularly from the practice of spirit possession. Sharp (1993:76) reports that Protestants in Ambanja in northwest Madagascar referred to possession by spirits of the royal dead (*tromba*) as *fady tromba*, or taboo, and insisted that those who were possessed have their spirits exorcized in a church ceremony if they wished to convert.

The *fifohazana* movement exhibits elements of what Joel Robbins (2003:226) calls a "temporal politics of discontinuity" that obtains among Pentecostal and

[60] Keller adopted the term "New Churches" from Paul Gifford's (1994) research on the public role of African Christianity. Keller points out that her use of the term is not meant to suggest that these churches have been recently established but rather that they have gained special, national prominence in Madagascar in the last decade of the twentieth century (2005:6).

charismatic Christianities. Revivalists uncompromisingly regard the practice of spirit possession, a part of Malagasy service to the ancestors, as demon possession and often deny coevalness to ancestral practices, which they associate largely with the traditional, rural, and non-modern past (cf. Rakotojoelinandrasana 2002:74-75). Because service to the ancestors is one way people embody and reconstitute a past (Lambek 2002), the *fifohazana* provides its adherents with a different temporal orientation and attempts to reorganize the way they recognize their kinship ties and obligations. In Ambanja, former spirit mediums who converted to Christianity and exorcised their spirits "become members of new Christian communities that in many ways are like newly found kin" (Sharp 1993:269). The history of the *fifohazana* movement models this radical break with ancestral practices, which I describe further in the second half of the chapter.

Moreover, for missionaries in Minnesota, *fifohazana* accounts gain their importance through the lens of the contemporary controversies in American Lutheranism that capture their interest and concern. These accounts aim to place the missionary "legacy" vitally within the reconfiguration of Lutheran sects emerging in the Twin Cities and simultaneously to assert the historical presence of missionaries as specific kinds of actors within the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Since their retirement, a number of missionaries have joined Lutheran charismatic churches in Minneapolis/St. Paul. These churches constitute part of the nation-wide Lutheran Renewal movement, an independent revival led largely since the early 1970s in Minneapolis/St. Paul by former missionaries to Madagascar. For some missionaries, including Hank, the process of reorienting their religious identity takes shape through the break that the Lutheran Renewal movement made with the Lutheranism of the ALC/ELCA.

In order to better understand "the moment of retrospective significance" for the missionary cited in the opening passage (Trouillot 1995:26), I first examine how Hank became involved in the *fifohazana* movement and how this involvement required him to reassess the missionary teachings and Lutheranism he knew when he first left the U.S. for Madagascar in 1956. Hank's story sheds light on how missionaries position themselves as historical actors within the Malagasy Lutheran Church and why they may have perceived themselves as "exiles" in the mid-1980s facing an explicitly characterized turning point in time. I then show how missionaries at the 2005 reunion incorporated the *fifohazana* into a missionary "confession," or creed, that lent sacred and political importance to their work in Madagascar. In the third section of the chapter, I complicate and broaden this missionary narrative through a brief overview of the ambivalent historical relationship among the fifohazana movement, the Malagasy Lutheran Church, and the American Lutheran mission. Finally, I demonstrate how *fifohazana* practices have taken on an important role in "renewing" one suburban Lutheran congregation in Minneapolis. Emmanuel, a Malagasy Lutheran pastor and *fifohazana* revivalist, established a healing ministry in 2006 at the church, which shares a relationship with the growing American Lutheran charismatic movement.

Hank and Patricia: The Fifohazana as a Symbol of Personal Spiritual Renewal

The missionary acting as the chairman of the mission in the mid-1980s was Hank, a Danish-American missionary pastor who worked in southeast Madagascar from 1956 until his retirement in 1990. He was regarded by fellow missionaries as an expert on the subject of the *fifohazana*, supportive of it among his affiliated students at the Lutheran theological seminary in Fianarantsoa, and an historian of the mission. After retirement

Hank returned to Madagascar five times to travel with his eldest daughter, a Twin Cities-based travel agent specializing in African travel, and to work for three-month stints at the Lutheran theological seminary, with the newly formed Faradofay Synod in the southeast, and as the English secretary for an NGO called Operation Bootstrap. His wife Patricia never returned to Madagascar after retirement, preferring instead to donate the cost of her airfare to her husband for use in whatever Malagasy church activities they deemed most worthwhile. She once told me that it was the "poverty" of the villages where they had lived in the South that no longer made travel viable to her: seeing the poverty was too "emotional," she explained, and she decided that her airfare money could best be used in helping people living in southern Madagascar.

Hank, the son of a locker-plant owner and operator who grew up in north-central Iowa, explained his spiritual call to me one afternoon as we sat with his wife Patricia in the living room of their St. Paul condominium. Hank was fourteen years old when he realized God was speaking to him.

> One evening I was attending a meeting where one of the missionaries from South Africa was speaking. And when he finished his talk he prayed the Lord's Prayer in the clicking accent of the Zulu people. At the same time, the Lord spoke to me and said, 'Hank, I want you to be a messenger in the world for me.' Like this man of course. [...] I went to this pastor and told him about this. I was very fearful. I knew my parents would not object but I went to the pastor and asked him about it. And he said, 'Go for it.' So I had the backing of my family and my Sunday school teachers.

Through Hank's unfamiliarity with the missionary's recitation of the Lord's Prayer, other common expectations were reversed in his experience: the Lord spoke directly *to him*, rather than having Hank voice the Lord's Prayer as he usually would.

The "click language's" otherness and opaqueness for Hank enabled him to hear the Lord, but the missionary's role in voicing the Lord's Prayer and the specific text

played an equally crucial role in the unfolding communication. The Lord called to Hank during the Lord's Prayer rather than before or after the prayer, which reveals the altered expectations for communication in times of prayer. Hank also quickly recalled the missionary before him as an embodied illustration of the Lord's call, since he used the missionary's presence to interpret what kind of "messenger" the Lord wanted him to be. In recounting the experience of his call, which I heard several times and which has undoubtedly been told on other occasions, Hank voiced the Lord's words to him in his own, viewing his younger self through the speaking position of the divine. The narrative memory of the call gave missionaries like Hank the ability to construct their Christian personhood and obedience to God in relation to a variety of social others: the divine; religious authorities, like Hank's pastor; kinship relations hearing the story; former selves, like the younger Hank; and foreshadowed future interlocutors, who in Hank's case speak languages unknown to his younger self.

Following this pivotal communication from God, Hank gradually prepared himself to become a missionary. He attended St. Olaf College in Northfield and then enrolled in Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he took classes with the seminary's mission theologian Andrew Burgess. Burgess, a former missionary to Madagascar, penned numerous popular Lutheran mission books including *Zanahary in South Madagascar* (1932), which Hank referred to as "part of the requirement" of the seminary course on missions. When I asked him about his seminary training for mission work, Hank said that it was less than adequate.

> H: I was a student of Dr. Burgess. But we didn't really prepare ourselves … Other than the regular mission teaching by Dr. Burgess, which I'm sad to say wasn't viable you see. And later on I attended Fuller Theological Seminary in California.

> That was in 66-67. I got a master's degree there. *That* was what should be taught to all missionaries going out. The course that they had there.
>
> BH: What did you get from that that you didn't –
>
> H: –Oh all that cross-cultural and um understanding religion in the terms of other peoples in the world. Comparing … I could compare it with Madagascar you see. Like some of the things I revealed to students [in the course] … the missionaries from Brazil could not understand, especially when it got into demonology, you see. But they didn't see that at the time.
>
> I got to be under Dr. McGavran who was the number one church growth person in the world. And Dr. Tippett, an Australian.

Hank frequently spoke of his Fuller Seminary training positively, and he explained to me that he found the course teachings on "demonology" particularly crucial for his work in Madagascar. Fuller Theological Seminary, established by "new evangelicals" in 1947 in Pasadena, California, began as a "College of Missions and Evangelism," playing an active role in training American missionaries and establishing trans-denominational organizations, such as World Vision (Bornstein 2005:20). New evangelicals like Donald McGavran of Fuller Seminary criticized Protestant ecumenicals in 1967 for focusing too exclusively on social problems in mission work and not giving equal consideration to the preaching of the gospel (Hutchinson 1987:188).

The Fuller teachings on demonology, for Hank, brought together observations that he made over the course of years of mission work in Madagascar. "Everything we've learned," Hank said, "we've learned on the job." His Fuller professor taught that evil spirits, manifestations of the devil, were just as likely to be part of Christian practice as the Holy Spirit. Hank understood spirit possession in Madagascar, as did other *fifohazana* adherents, through the idea that the possessed were held by evil spirits. He grew even more interested in the *fifohazana* because he realized that many of his students at the

Lutheran seminary in Fianarantsoa, where he taught from 1976 to 1989, were involved in the revival. He often told me that, when a guest speaker teaching the Book of John asked in one of his classes how many were shepherds or *mpiandry*, 12 of the 15 students raised their hands. This was surprising to him, he explained, because students often kept their involvement in the revival secret from other missionary pastors. Most notably, his missionary predecessor at the seminary had been unsupportive of the revival.

Hank first realized that he needed to learn more about "demonology," as he called it, when a Lutheran woman in his first congregation in Ambovombe frequently appeared possessed during church services. The woman, he said, kept disturbing the service at Ambovombe, and, from a prior interaction with her, he quickly noticed the signs of possession: she moved her *lamba* to cover her face and head (closing her ears off from the Word, Patricia said), her body shook, and a different, "demon" voice emerged from her body, speaking and saying that s/he wanted to "kill" Hank. He addressed the congregation to explain that the woman appeared to be possessed by a demon. "Satan is there to kill us spiritually, you see," Hank commented to me, breaking the narrative frame momentarily.

At this point in the story, Hank stood up from his chair in the St. Paul condominium and reenacted his efforts to rid the woman of demons, saying the forceful performative "leave" as he made a pushing or casting out motion with his hand in the air. This charged interaction between Hank and other Lutherans in the church and the demon possessed woman culminated in what Hank said he calls "the powered encounter," a time "when the devil really goes to work" through the possessed person's body. Illustrating the devil's immense power at this time, he said, was the fact that it took four men to hold

onto the woman as she flailed and shook. The voice coming out of the woman, said, as Hank translated, “I hate you, I hate you for bringing me to this church service.” The woman was exorcised “in the name of Jesus of Nazareth,” and four demons emerged from her body, one of which was “lust.” Both Hank and Patricia emphasized the physical/exterior signs of this transformation.

Throughout his description, particularly when he went back to her story at my prompting, Hank said that the possessed woman was unattractive, describing her unkempt hair, and that, ironically, she hoped to marry a “good-looking” man. He believed that she had become possessed, and perhaps made a concession with the devil, in order “to appear great to the guy.” The woman had been given in marriage to a much older man and suffered in this undesired relationship. Providing a contrast to the woman, Patricia spoke up and mentioned a Christian man with leprosy in their community whose “whole face shined” and “was thanksgiving” for the sweet potatoes and food she gave him one day when he approached their house; she said that one can *see* the physical difference of someone who believes in Jesus Christ in contrast to someone who does not.

Hank’s story of the possessed woman in Ambovombe explains how he came to take evil spirits seriously as part of Lutheran worship. But this story also strikingly illustrates what Lesley Sharp (1999) writes of Protestant exorcisms in northwest Madagascar: that exorcisms “emphasize themes of power, dominance, and change” (190). Hank and Patricia both pointed out that being exorcized involved a full transformation of the woman’s social person, one they observed carefully through a sequence of physical or exterior signs (e.g., the appearance of her hair, voice and prosody, positioning of body and clothing). It is also notable that the demon-possessed

person in Hank's story is a woman. Though Sharp does not indicate how many of the possessed in Protestant exorcisms are women, she reports that women constitute the majority of spirit mediums in Ambanja: in 1987, 50 percent of adult women were possessed by *tromba* or spirits of the royal dead, beginning often at age 18 or 20 (1999:169).

During Protestant exorcisms in Ambanja, Sharp describes how the officiating pastor, typically a man, takes on an active and "dominant" role by placing a hand or Bible on the possessed person's head, while the possessed person kneels or sits (1999: 191). Consider, again, how Hank stood up as he was telling the story of the possessed woman. He reenacted his effort to cast out the demons, drawing upon the power of the spoken Word ("in the name of Jesus, leave" or "leave"), from a standing position.[61] While it is important to draw attention to the powerful role of gender relations in exorcisms, I do not wish to oversimplify the important relational dimensions of these interactions. All the involved parties (i.e., the pastor, possessed person, witnessing congregants, and pastor's assistants) draw efficacy from and participate in the opposing forces and qualities evoked in the transformational scene of an exorcism: Satan/God, female/male, passive/active, ugly/beautiful, and evil/good. Stories of demon possession and exorcism, however, must be examined as multi-layered and complex performances of power, religious authority, and gender.

[61] Because of my physical proximity to Hank, one implication is that I participated in the reenactment of this episode as the possessed woman: as Hank stood up, I continued to sit at his left on the adjacent living room sofa. Patricia was moving in and out of the living room at the time, replenishing the supply of crackers and snacks that she had laid out on the coffee table. Although I think my physical presence contributed to Hank's telling of the story, other features of his telling complicate any kind of quick conclusions one might draw: he moved his arm in the air directly in front of him to cast out the demons, engaging a space where the unseen woman existed and took shape in the story. Though I was seated very close to Hank as he made this gesture, his attention to the space in front of him and not to that at his left (where I sat) somewhat closed off his physical field and further framed the story, as if I was looking in on the scene as it unfolded in real time.

During our conversation at her home, Patricia went on to describe another woman who had been exorcized at a Lutheran congregation in the *Soixante sept* hectare of Antananarivo, where they lived for two years while Hank worked at the Lutheran printing press (*Trano Printy Loterana*). Hank and Patricia mentioned how different this woman looked, as a beautiful and almost unrecognizable person, at a subsequent Sunday service. There was, Patricia stated plainly, no way to think of this as the same woman they saw previously. Being "freed of demons," Hank added, was "like coming down the sawdust trail" and glowing from the exuberant presence of the Holy Spirit. Linking exorcism and revivalism, Hank related the *fifohazana* to the early twentieth-century American revivals led by evangelist Billy Sunday (1862-1935).[62] Sunday's traveling campaign held revival meetings in temporary wooden tabernacles with sawdust floors. Walking down the "sawdust trail" was a metaphor for the experience of personal spiritual transformation that thousands of people experienced during Sunday's revival meetings.

Hank's reference to early twentieth-century revivalism in the United States stems from a deeper relationship he perceives among evil forces, repentance, and revival, which for him fundamentally connects the *fifohazana* to the American Lutheran charismatic movement. The devil and demons, Hank specified, have always been active among people in the U.S. just as much as those elsewhere. Nonetheless he gradually noticed a greater knowledge and awareness of demons among Lutherans in the United States through the 1960s and 1970s, which he referred to as a "time of the occult." At least three or four people would stand in the room's corner during his deputation presentations,

[62] Harding (2000:177) points out that Sunday's evangelism criticized the "feminization of the church" and the "feminist reforms" of the early twentieth century. Sunday and evangelist Clarence Macartney supported a particular kind of "muscular Christianity," Harding argues, that developed among fundamentalist preachers (178).

when he was on leave from mission work in Madagascar. “We knew right away what the question was that they were going to ask,” he said, referring to other Madagascar missionaries who had a similar experience. “‘Do you know anything about the Holy Spirit revival meeting in Minneapolis?’ … They deciphered out of our talk, demonology and these different things, that we were part of this system, this [charismatic] movement.”

What Hank identified was the growing Lutheran charismatic movement (now called Lutheran Renewal), which gained more followers in Minneapolis through a revival in 1972. After their retirement in 1990, Hank and Patricia joined the now eight thousand-member Lutheran Renewal congregation in St. Paul called Willow Creek, which has been one of the largest and most influential churches in the Lutheran charismatic movement. The congregation’s main “campus” is only one mile from their condominium. Hank and Patricia receive their pension from the ELCA, Hank works part-time as a visiting pastor for a St. Paul ELCA congregation, and the couple still attends ELCA global mission events for retired missionaries in Minnesota. They believe the Lutheran Renewal congregation, however, better fits their faith and theological positions, which changed and grew over the course of their years in Madagascar. Hank often noted that he became “pro-charismatic movement” in the United States through his involvement with the *fifohazana* in Madagascar.

The Lutheran Renewal churches call themselves a “new wineskin” that eschews the denominational bureaucracy, church structure, and centralized leadership of the ELCA. Renewal churches favor “modern prophecy,” the leading of the Holy Spirit, ministries of deliverance from demon possession, “spiritual warfare mapping,” and lay leadership at many levels within each congregation (Longman 2003:127-128). As one

leading Renewal pastor and former missionary to Madagascar, Ned, explained to me in an interview in March 2006, the Renewal movement espouses the view that believers achieve "sanctification by grace through faith, not just justification." Ned was pointing out that each believer embarks on a path of "sanctification" by receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit, not simply that the believer is assured of the gift of salvation by grace through faith (i.e., justification). The latter is the official theological position of the ELCA.

While the Lutheran Renewal movement questions the denominational structure and recent theological heritage of the ELCA, it remains Lutheran and incorporates elements of Lutheran liturgy and Lutheran pietism into worship. At the same time, the movement shares a relationship with charismatics from other denominations and inter-denominational movements (Longman 2003:134-135; Christenson 1978:9-12). Longman (2003:126) estimates that around 250,000 charismatics participated in the ELCA from its formation in 1988 through 2003. It is unclear, though, if this figure includes those who belonged to congregations that left the ELCA in the 1990s due to disputes on a number of theological and social issues, including the ordination of women, the inerrancy or historical interpretation of the Bible, the ordination of gay and lesbian clergy, and the sanctification of same-sex unions.

Former missionaries to Madagascar have been especially important figures in the Lutheran Renewal movement, something that made Hank and Patricia at home in the Willow Creek congregation. Willow Creek was led by their friend and colleague Ned, a former missionary to Madagascar from 1954 to 1960 and child of missionaries, during its period of greatest growth from 1961 until 1999. Ned and his brother Harold, also a

former missionary to Madagascar from 1955 to 1973, saw a direct connection between the charismatic Lutheran Renewal and the *fifohazana* movement. After leaving Madagascar, Harold wrote his doctorate of ministry thesis on bringing the practices of the *fifohazana* into the American Lutheran context. Although they now live in Minnesota, the two brothers continue to travel to Madagascar. In 2002, after a trip to the southwest with Hank, Harold, and another retired missionary, Ned was interviewed by a reporter in the local Lutheran newspaper in Minneapolis/St. Paul and was quoted as saying: "American churches need renewal badly. We can learn much from the *fifohazana* in Madagascar."

In a volume that examines the global roots of the charismatic movement, Poewe (1994:xi) argues that "charismatic Christianity" is partly a construction of the North American media, which often portrayed it as an American invention that began among Baby Boomers in the 1960s and was subsequently disseminated around the world. In fact, Poewe maintains that charismatic Christianity as a global phenomenon arose from multiple revivals and renewals that spread across centuries. Charismatic Christianity also has deep and influential roots within mainline Protestant and Catholic churches, though charismatics might draw attention to the contemporary discontinuities. Madagascar missionaries endorse this view: they do not in fact locate charismatic Christianity in the United States alone, but develop a more global and interwoven tapestry of charismatic practices that links specific revivals in the United States, Madagascar, and, as I describe below, Norway.

To summarize, for Hank, the *fifohazana* has become a symbol of personal spiritual renewal: he identifies his gradual immersion into the practices of the revival in southern Madagascar as a personal process of awaking to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Through telling stories of exorcism in his St. Paul living room, Hank renews his identity as a "messenger" of God. In these stories, he draws upon God's power against evil and simultaneously participates in the transformation of the possessed's social identity. These stories suggest that Hank understands and constructs his personhood in relation to these narrated prior moments. But he makes these transformational scenes of possession present in his daily life in Minneapolis/St. Paul, where they continue to shape his religious identity.

As we were staying in Antananarivo during our trip to Madagascar, Hank told me that the main missionary debate of the 1980s was a "crisis of identity." Some people wondered, he explained, "Who are we and what are we doing here?" In response, they emphasized their identity as Americans *in* Madagascar. Hank said he viewed things differently: his "call" had been to be a missionary to the Malagasy people, he explained, and he therefore saw his primary identity and his duty through his membership in the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Missionaries like Hank, Patricia, and Ned found several reasons to leave the ELCA. Their religious identity, as Hank told me, changed while in the "mission field." But Hank also indicated that the ALC/ELCA adopted a policy of global mission in the 1980s that characterized foreign missionaries as cultural outsiders in Madagascar. Hank argued to the contrary: missionaries in his view played a role in fostering and supporting the growth of the *fifohazana.* The movement, therefore, became a point of "dry land" for him in exile from the ALC/ELCA, as well as a bridge to the future prominence of Christianity in Madagascar.

Figure 4.1. Sung worship at the Annual Holy Spirit Conference, main sanctuary, "Willow Creek" Lutheran Renewal congregation in suburban St. Paul, July 3, 2006.

Incorporating the Fifohazana into a Missionary Confession and "Legacy"

The *fifohazana* movement may be characterized as a contemporary meeting point among different missionary factions, including those who fully support the ELCA's liberal ecumenical position on global mission, lifelong missionaries who disagree with the ELCA position yet see the *fifohazana* as an "authentic" Malagasy cultural expression of Christianity, and former missionaries who became influential figures in the American Lutheran charismatic movement in Minneapolis/St. Paul. In each of these cases, stories and accounts of the *fifohazana* movement affirmed specific, yet divergent, dimensions of religious identity for missionaries and their families who are now living in the Twin Cities. Accounts that sanctioned the contemporary role of the *fifohazana* within the Malagasy Lutheran Church played a prominent role in missionary gatherings, while stories emerged in interviews with others that characterized some of the historical tensions among missionaries on the subject. In this section, I analyze how missionaries at

the biennial reunion in March 2005 identified a shared missionary legacy in the *fifohazana* by rhetorically placing it within an historical statement that closely resembles a confessional form from the Lutheran liturgy.

Through its current policies, funding, and terminology, the leadership of the ALC/ELCA largely constructs the missionary movement as part of an historical memory, a definitive past from which the contemporary world is changed, temporally marked off, and morally differentiated. In the late 1980s, the ALC/ELCA undertook an oral history project with elderly women missionaries as a way to preserve the perspectives of an "underdocumented" population in the "history of global mission" (www.elca.org). Through these and other forms of archival record-keeping, the ELCA has built an "institutional memory" that, in the words of a prominent church archivist, "is essential for understanding who we have been and who we are as Christ's church" (Daniels 2001[1991]:4). This consciousness of the past as a "heritage" (Daniels 2001 [1991]:22), a time to learn from and yet move beyond in constructing a shared identity, has the consequence of making missionaries into living representations of that past. It also subsumes their personal stories under the history of a collective congregation or movement. Church record-keeping initiatives emphasize that their narrative memories will ultimately illuminate the institutional past (Daniels 2001:15).

As I described in Chapter 1, former missionaries, known to each other as a "missionary family," assemble biennially for a special three-day reunion in the Upper Midwest. One March 2005 reunion presentation, titled "Ravalomanana's 'Shepherds' [*Mpiandry*], January-July 2002," promised the forty-nine missionary participants an on-the-ground view of the *fifohazana*'s role in the disputed 2002 national election from the

perspective of Norman and his wife Rose, the last full-time American Lutheran medical missionaries who retired in 2004. During the 2002 election in Madagascar, both major candidates – the longtime incumbent Didier Ratsiraka and candidate Marc Ravalomanana – had declared victory, resulting in a six-month political crisis for the presidency.

It was not incidental that Norman and Rose led the presentation on the church's role in Malagasy national politics. Most missionaries view Norman as a unifying figure that not only bridged the past and present of the mission but also appropriately transformed his own approach to mission work over time to respond to the changing conditions of medical care in Madagascar. Norman is a third generation missionary in one family that had worked in the southwest region since 1892. Norman's personal trajectory as a missionary reflected the changing perspective of the church: he spent decades practicing medicine in the southwest town of Ejeda near the village of his childhood, but moved to Antsirabe and Antananarivo in the late 1970s to establish an island-wide health care department under the direction of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. In this position, Norman and his wife Rose worked to bring the *toby*s (Malagasy, lit. camp, or healing center) of the revival into the biomedical services committee of the FLM. Many regard the latter act as a pivotal unification of the church and the revival. Due to the duration of his involvement on the island, his expertise, and the Malagasy government's recognition of his work with several commendations, many missionaries regard Norman as a spokesman for the missionary community, or even a "statesman" in one man's words.

In the presentation, the first slide prefigured the election outcome with a poetic reference to the power of belief, citing the English translation of Christian presidential

candidate Ravalomanana's campaign slogan, "Don't be afraid; just believe," from the synoptic Gospel of Mark (5:36). With the second slide, however, the presentation focus shifted from Ravalomanana's campaign to the identified audience of missionary participants seated before the makeshift pulpit at the retreat in western Wisconsin. Norman elaborated, reading the slide's visually evident sentence haltingly in short-hand bullet points: "Your legacy and those who gave their lives, by the grace of God, and the leading of the Holy Spirit, produced Malagasy Christian leaders who caused [a] change of government from evil to good." While these stark terms echoed the evangelical-political rhetoric of Ravalomanana's followers, who promised to and did ceremonially exorcise the devil (*devoly)* from the presidential office upon Ravalomanana's investiture, the slide sequence temporarily circumvented the subject and instead built a selectively organized historical narrative, which in its argument enabled the present government to exist.

Rhetorically developed through the visual and spoken segments of the presentation was the notion that the missionaries' personal sacrifice, made possible only through the "grace of God," had not been in vain, but begat a generation of Malagasy Christian leaders, who led the church from the provincial south to the national political stage. The subsequent six slides of the presentation displayed photographs of the two American Lutheran cemeteries in Tolagnaro/Ft. Dauphin and Manasoa and listed the birth and death dates, age of death, and cause of death of the 34 missionaries and their children who died on the island during 94 years of missionary presence. With the deceased listed individually, the presenters signaled to participants knowingly to elicit additional information when the name of an audience member's husband, sister, or

grandparent flashed on the screen, thereby incorporating multiply intersecting kinship relations with audience members into the distinct "legacy" assembled by the presentation. Images of the prophet Nenilava's tomb; former Malagasy Lutheran Church president Gilbert Tahilo; and Jean Lahiniriko, former Speaker of the National Assembly and a trained *mpiandry*, rounded out the concentrated microhistory embedded within the narrated events of Ravalomanana's presidential bid.

At the March 2005 reunion, a gathering designed to promote unity, the language ("your legacy") of the *fifohazana* presentation tried to bring participants into a singular, shared legacy. Resembling a confession of faith, a creedal staple of Lutheran liturgy, the framing sentence induced listening participants to inhabit a compound legacy and simultaneously elevated it as an "object of discourse" beyond the self (Keane 1995). In the reunion presentation, the form of the sentence highlighted the act of uniformly stating a "truth" within a church service, producing a kind of memory of socially remembering the performance of commitment within each new instance of voicing the specific words. The form thus signaled its own historical role within the church, carrying traces of previous utterances. Moreover, the particular setting of the reunion facilitated the memorial anchoring of the words to a church service. The three-day reunion was held at a Lutheran retreat center in rural western Wisconsin, near the Minnesota-Wisconsin border. The events of the reunion took place inside the camp's small white chapel building, which included a makeshift pulpit and altar that doubled as a lectern. Each day's schedule included devotionals and Bible study, which culminated in a Lutheran worship service with communion that was led on the final day by one of the ordained missionary pastors in attendance.

Lutherans imbue the act of remembering with a sacred quality through the ritual vocalization of the confessional statements from the Book of Concord. The Lutheran confessions, or creeds, ritually unify believers through a "common affirmation of faith," which recognizes God's revelation in Jesus Christ as a present and living legacy (Braaten 1983:27). The vocal affirmation of these confessional creeds identifies believers as living witnesses and agents of the history of the church. In the context of the missionary reunion, I suggest the use of a rhetorical form that resembles a confessional statement has the effect of unifying living and deceased missionaries into a single collective and of imbuing the act of remembering with a sacred quality (cf. Spiegel 2002:150, 152). In using this rhetorical form, missionaries reinstate themselves in the life of the church and make sense of the historical events of the mission through the dominant commemorative paradigm of the Lutheran liturgy. In this sense, then, the missionaries highlight the living and present qualities of their "legacy," disputing the relegation of their work to a social and ideological past.

The March 2005 reunion presentation encased the history of missionary involvement in a scaffolding of *fifohazana* figures and events, which strove to establish intertextual linkages between the two in opposition to the dominant discourse of the ELCA. Hank once told me the ELCA had endorsed the *fifohazana* movement because it was an "indigenous" movement, a term reinforcing the prevailing ELCA political ideology on global mission. From his perspective, the endorsement incorrectly presumed missionaries had had little role in fostering connections between the church and the *fifohazana*. The ELCA had obscured the presence of missionaries in Malagasy Christian practice, he suggested, and, through its contemporary position on evangelism, reinstated

American missionaries and Malagasy Lutherans as two distinct cultural "sides" of interaction in southern Madagascar. Among the elder generation of retired missionaries, many thus positioned themselves as historical actors in the Malagasy Lutheran Church through specific retellings of their involvement in southern Madagascar.

In ethnographic research with Catholic missionaries in the Bolivian highlands, Orta (2002) discovered that missionaries frequently described experiencing a personal conversion, or rebirth, as a turning point in the process of their transformation into local actors. These conversion narratives of self-transformation redefined missionaries as "plausible evangelizing subjects" among Aymara-speaking people (713). Missionaries perceived themselves through their interaction and involvement with Aymara in activities that fostered local relations among the living and the deceased and inaugurated new persons into the social fabric through the conferral of the sacraments, naming ceremonies, and community festivals (713, 714). Orta (2002) argues that, for his Polish and American missionary informants, shifting pastoral ideologies of mission work within the Catholic Church influenced how they produced "locality" as a salient feature of their own selfhood.

In Latin America, the Catholic Church embarked on a post-World War II "second evangelization," which included a critical reevaluation of Catholic indigenous identity and colonial mission history in the Andes (721-723). Debates of the time centered on the reassessment of appropriate Christian practice by both missionaries and Aymara. Were Aymara only baptized but not evangelized? How could contemporary missionaries move beyond the work of their predecessors in the region, which may have contributed to the current problems of the church? These questions and others were posed in the context of

changing theologies of mission work within the Catholic Church. In the 1970s, the prevailing theologies of liberation in Latin America largely gave way to theologies of inculturation, which valued local expressions as the basis of the most profound, authentic, and "universal" religious meaning (Orta 2002:724). Through the dominant contemporary pastoral paradigm of inculturation, Orta's missionary informants identified local Aymara culture as the foundation for uncovering previously concealed Christian truths to both Aymara and to missionaries (724-725).

As I observed on numerous occasions, American Lutheran missionaries often referred to themselves in everyday conversation as *vazaha* (Malagasy, stranger, foreigner, white person), defining themselves racially and socially through the Malagasy language as they were described by Malagasy interlocutors. But the evocation of this label in Minneapolis/St. Paul was simultaneously a testament to their understanding of local Malagasy social life and to their ability to see themselves through the eyes of their Malagasy neighbors and co-religionists (cf. Orta 2002:715). They indicated to me that they may have been seen initially as complete "strangers" in every sense but that over time, even as they retained their social identity as *vazaha*, they became familiar figures to people locally and took on a multifaceted identity within a specific locale.

As we were walking by the church building in the Tanambao (Malagasy, new town) district of Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro, Hank said to me that he felt "so glad" the day he heard someone in his congregation finally call him *rapasy* (Malagasy, pastor), a term of familiarity and a sign of social respect, rather than the more formal term *pasteur* (French, pastor). At their first assignment in Ambovombe in the late 1950s, when Madagascar was still a French colony, Hank and Patricia were initially mistaken as French by Tandroy

Malagasy during their trips to the rural villages outlying Ambovombe. Their facility with speaking in the Malagasy language rather than French and their familiarity with people through repeat visits gradually eroded this misconstrual of their social identity. Learning and speaking the local dialect of Malagasy, Hank said, enabled him and his wife to "become *ray amandreny*" (Malagasy, parents or "fathers and mothers" as Hank translated it) in the Gospel with the Christians they met during their trips as rural evangelists. Rakotojoelinandrasana (2002:31) indicates that revivalists use this term (*ray amandreny*) for shepherds (*mpiandry*) and other Christian leaders in the *fifohazana.*

Hank's remembrances were not framed as the identifiable experience of personal conversion that Orta (2002) describes for Catholic missionaries in the Bolivian highlands. However, they do suggest the point of recognition of a deepening familiarity and increasing complexity in the relationship between American missionaries and the Malagasy people with whom they worked. Through narrative observations of their identity from the position of their Malagasy interlocutors, these missionaries attempted to spatially locate their own acceptance within Malagasy congregations and villages. The ELCA position on global mission, as it referred to past mission work within the church, characterized all missionaries as cultural outsiders, some told me, even if they had spent decades of their lives acculturating themselves to the subtleties of Malagasy languages, regional and ethnic differences, and customs. From their perspective, the ELCA had not appropriately differentiated the variable kinds of local knowledge and situated personhood produced among missionaries, some of whom spent 40 years living in southern Madagascar as compared with those who worked for two years on the island.

In light of the ELCA's institutional statements, missionaries recalled these "familiarizing" interactions in the Malagasy Lutheran Church as iconic representations of their social identity that conveyed their purpose in the social landscapes where they lived. Such narratives placed importance on the bonds formed by missionaries in spatial contiguity with their Malagasy neighbors. The familiarizing stories thus identified missionaries as residents and participants in a particular Malagasy locality, rather than merely American institutional actors in Madagascar. For those initially mistaken by Malagasy as being French, the correction of their misconstrued social identity was crucial in order for their work to proceed in a more effective fashion and for reinforcing their own understanding of the key distinctions between themselves and other transnationals in the southern region.[63] Through the very passing of time, increasing familiarity, and their consistent use of regional dialects of Malagasy rather than French, they worked to distinguish themselves from other *vazaha*.

To summarize, the contemporary role of the *fifohazana* as an orienting guidepost of the missionary past was neither assumed nor effortlessly evoked but required specific discursive moves to produce. At occasions such as the March 2005 missionary reunion, the presentations endeavored to produce unity among attendants and to bring an oftentimes unruly past into conformity with a confession of faith. In the following section, drawing upon recent ethnohistorical accounts written by Malagasy Lutherans, I describe the history and practices of the *fifohazana* movement in Madagascar. Through a

[63] One man who had been a short-term medical volunteer in the Malagasy Lutheran hospitals in 1972 characterized the missionary depiction of the French expatriates in the South partly as a backlash against French exclusion of missionaries in events of the local transnational European community around Tolagnaro. In this man's portrayal, each group of foreign nationals held a stereotype of the other: the French viewed the American missionaries as religious radicals while the missionaries characterized the French as morally depraved and forbade their teenage children from attending parties hosted by the French families living in the city (Interview, 3 August 2006).

series of brief historical portraits, I aim to draw out and examine how people explain some of the tensions that existed between the *fifohazana* and American missionaries, as well as between the *fifohazana* and ancestral practices.

The Fifohazana Movement: Three Portraits of the Revival

The *fifohazana* movement stems from the conversion experience of Betsileo *mpisikidy* (diviner) Dada Rainisoalambo in 1894. As the story goes, Rainisoalambo attended a Norwegian Missionary Society school in the southern plateau and became a catechist, but he left the Christian church as an adult and began working as a diviner in the small village of Ambatoreny.[64] Rainisoalambo suffered from a skin disorder and prayed to God on the night of October 15, 1894 that he would be healed. Jesus appeared to him in a vision and promised to heal him if he abandoned all the material implements of his work. In response, Rainisoalambo dumped his healing medicines (*fanafody-gasy*) in the latrine. His skin disorder gradually disappeared, and Rainisoalambo formed a village called Soatanana (Malagasy, the beautiful village) where he established the first *toby* (Malagasy, lit., camp), modeled after the self-reliant community of Acts 4:32-35, to heal the sick, preach the Gospel message, and train others as *mpiandry* (shepherds) and *iraka* (apostles/missionaries). Rainisoalambo developed a practical theology that included rules for Christian conduct and promoted literacy; the cleanliness of one's home, yard, and clothes; and, as one American Lutheran development worker reports, the cultivation of fruit trees (Berkas 1994:1). Throughout the rest of his life, Rainisoalambo urged his family and friends to repent and renounce divination and service to the ancestral dead, an integral part of Malagasy social life throughout the island (see e.g., Sharp 1996, 1999).

[64] The version of Rainisoalambo's life which I recount here is based on accounts I heard from informants, as well as those written by Rakotojoelinandrasana (2002) and Rasolondraibe (1998).

Three leaders or prophets - Neny Be Ravelonjanahary; Daniel Rakotozandry, a Lutheran pastor; and Volahavana Germaine Nenilava - followed Rainisoalambo in his work and lend in hindsight a sense of continuity to a "movement" that in actuality comprised several separate revivals. The most recent leader, Nenilava, became known as the prophetess of the Lutheran church and gained national prominence and popularity among not only followers of the *fifohazana* but other Christians as well. As Sharp (1999:173) observes, Lutherans took special pleasure in claiming Nenilava, an Antaimoro Malagasy woman who was born in 1922 and died in 1998, as "their own" prophet. [65] Nenilava established an influential *toby* at Ankaramalaza in the district of Manakara on the east coast and later opened a second *toby* at Ambohibao eight kilometers outside the capital Antananarivo, but toured the island frequently to visit and help the sick, those spiritually searching, and the disinherited elderly poor. Under Nenilava's direction, two additional *tobys* were instituted first in Betioky in the south to minister to Mahafaly and Tandroy people and then in Tolagnaro/Ft. Dauphin on the southernmost tip of the island. In all, more than 200 *toby* have been established under the *fifohazana* movement, which spans most Christian denominations throughout the country.

Ned's Explanation: The Relationship of the Fifohazana and Norwegian Lutheran Pietism

The *fifohazana* movement has a long history within the Lutheran church in Madagascar, but only came to be accepted widely as a legitimate part of it since the 1970s (Keller 2005:55). In combination with the enduring ecclesiastical authority of foreign missionaries who opposed it, the mixed Malagasy Lutheran clerical response to the *fifohazana* positioned the movement for years, led predominantly by lay prophets, as

[65] Nenilava was not only active in Madagascar, but traveled and preached in France, Norway, and in Illinois and Minnesota between April and November 1973 (Halverson 1984).

a syncretic challenge to Christian authority. People indicated to me that it is difficult to know how many Malagasy Lutherans were actually involved with the *fifohazana* movement at any given period of time prior to the 1960s, because many concealed their involvement with the lay prophets from both Malagasy church authorities and from American missionaries. I was told by Hank that these revivalists likely perceived the ambivalent or disfavored position of the revival in the eyes of many religious authorities and feared the knowledge of their own involvement might threaten their participation in the church.

Mid-twentieth-century church histories produced within the mission frequently skirted direct endorsement or denunciation of the *fifohazana* by employing referentially ambiguous language on the subject of revivals. This ambivalence could be attributed to the politically charged role that the *fifohazana* had come to play within the mission, since it drew out the differing approaches to the Lutheran faith that were present among missionaries. Writing in 1968, one non-clerical male missionary echoed criticisms within the mission of revival movements by noting *in general* that revivals have "sometimes gone astray and have led to real headaches for the Church," have "degenerated into something invented by man," and "overemphasized the emotional experience in religion" (Johnson 1968:19). While the author warned of the high likelihood of hypocrisy or non-divinely inspired "false religion" among revivalists, the same publication however acknowledged the importance of the *fifohazana* through a one-page photo spread that included images of Nenilava leading a procession, of Rainisoalambo, a recent church built by the revival movement, and the laying on of hands by *iraka*, or disciples.

The Lutheran Renewal pastor, Ned, once explained some of the tensions he observed between the revival and American Lutheran missionaries. Ned grew up in southwest Madagascar, where his parents worked in the village of Betioky between 1920 and 1961. Ned told me that his clerical father performed exorcisms among congregants, demonstrating an openness to the *fifohazana* movement. Ned euphemistically commented that the "loudest voices" against the revival in his parent's generation tended to be in the Evangelical Lutheran Church rather than the Lutheran Free Church. By making this distinction, the pastor was evoking a series of critical differentiations among adherents of the two Norwegian Lutheran churches, which occupied separate yet primarily cooperative mission fields in Madagascar from 1888 until their merger in 1963. Citing its pietistic roots in the Haugean movement of Norway and espousing congregational autonomy and the centrality of the laity, the Lutheran Free Church, of which the pastor's parents were members, situated its work in the southwest. The Evangelical Lutheran Church, known to be the more theologically moderate of the two and favoring a polity arrangement whereby the synod held power over individual congregations, established stations in the southeast.

Ned's point inferred that Lutheran Free Church members would be more likely to accept and perhaps identify with the revival – with its focus on prayer, relative autonomy from the established church, and lay involvement – than those in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In making this point, Ned tacitly connected his personal involvement in the Lutheran Renewal movement to a genealogy of openness to the Holy Spirit that characterized the Lutheran Free Church, even while he distinguished himself on the whole from the Lutheranism of the ELCA. This was an intriguing historical distinction,

since the Lutheran Free Church became a part of the ELCA in 1963. By going back further in time, before the church consolidations of the early 1960s, Ned could identify the church of his parents as a type of Lutheranism that more closely espoused the qualities of lay involvement, calling on the Holy Spirit, and prayer-healing that also characterize the *fifohazana* and the Lutheran Renewal movement. Thus, even while he drew my attention to the tension within the mission regarding the revival, Ned retrospectively built a relationship with his lineal family relations around the promotion of shared doctrinal and theological principles. It was not simply his aim to highlight the discontinuity of practice between the ELCA and Lutheran Renewal, but to pick and choose affinity among forms of Lutheranism that stretched across centuries and continents.

By discursively linking the *fifohazana* with the more pietistic Lutheran Free Church, the pastor implicated another nested set of connections that have become part of the storied lore of the *fifohazana* among Norwegian-American missionaries. Since the founding prophet of the movement attended a Norwegian Missionary Society church and school, some fold the incipient vision of the revival into an ethnic-religious history of Norwegian Lutheran pietism. This history usually originates with Hans Nielson Hauge, the lay reformer who lived from 1771 to 1824 in Norway, preached a social gospel that strove for the economic advancement of the Norwegian peasantry, and challenged the prevailing religious authority of the state Lutheran church.

One son of American Lutheran missionaries who are now involved with the Lutheran Renewal movement, a seminary-trained pastor himself, informed me that the *fifohazana* traces its origins to the prayer of a single woman missionary, who was a

relative of Hauge and knew of his life and work. She prayed for a revival in Madagascar, the first destination of the Norwegian Missionary Society beginning in 1866, and indicated in her prayer the day (October 15, 1894) on which she wanted spiritual renewal to take place. Aligning the power of the woman's temporal supplication and God's omnipresence, the man concluded with rhetorical flourish that the "awakening descended 105 years ago." In his estimation, through prayer, one revival – the Haugean movement – begat another – the *fifohazana*. But rather than tracing the impact of other revivals on the Norwegian Haugean movement, it appeared in his telling as autochthonous and in a causal relationship with the *fifohazana*. The prayer of Malagasy persons, particularly Rainisoalambo, occupied no agentive role in this version, which channeled the most commanding divine intercession through Norway and Norwegian persons. The *fifohazana* was placed in the service of a history that ultimately affirmed the pietist genealogy of Norwegian-American missionaries.

Revival in the Southwest: The Fifohazana and Church Growth

Despite missionary disagreements concerning the revival, in certain areas, the influence of the revival was undeniable and could not, it seemed, go unrecognized as the foundation of church growth and evangelism. One example comes from the area of Ampanihy and Ejeda in the southwest, where Christian work began under national leadership by Pastor Dada Olafa in 1918 and the first resident American missionaries Ole and Petra Asheim arrived in 1920 and stayed until 1948. In Ampanihy, a new stone church was planned beginning in the late 1940s to replace the previous building that had become too small for the congregation. It was at this time that a revival was occurring in

Ampanihy, Manasoa, and Betioky, led by national pastors, evangelists, and catechists. In a 1979 church history, Karl, who lived in the Ampanihy district from 1951 to 1956, cautioned against viewing the revival of the 1950s as a sudden and unpredicted occurrence in the region:

> A revival does not necessarily spring up suddenly. It is [preceded] by years and years of faithful work in the church and by regular and meaningful times of calling on the Lord in prayer (cited in Ose 1979:np).

Writing in the late 1970s, the missionary emphasized the historical continuity that existed between the revival and the church. He traced the revival period of the 1950s in Ampanihy to the service of the original Malagasy pastor in the area, Dada Olafa; to the region's catechists; and to the Christians who studied the Bible and who identified the "need for revival" and faithfully encouraged it (Ose 1979).

Within the Ampanihy district, national pastors, catechists, and missionaries traveled regularly to outlying villages in order to spread the Gospel message. The ordained missionary pastor who served in Ampanihy, whom I call Karl Olsen, took one evangelism trip (*tournee*) with a Malagasy pastor named Adolphe Santinely and other catechists in November and early December of 1953 to the northwest section of the Ampanihy district, an area only reachable by foot or oxcart at the time. He described the experience in an article written for the American audience of the Lutheran Free Church *Horizons* periodical in 1954, reprinted in his recently published memoir:

> The people by the hundreds were eager to hear what the visitors had to say. … As they listened some of them literally began to tremble. The demons shook them and tormented them. … Several times Pastor Adolphe stopped preaching, laid his hands on the victims, prayed and in the Name of Jesus commanded the demons to come out. A total of fifty persons were set free from demon-possession in the area during those days (Olsen 2004:110).

Instances of possession among Mahafaly villagers in Antanandranto, the area where Karl had traveled, were termed “demon possession” and those possessed were considered “victims” of demons in his account. The numerous cases of possession at these meetings were striking. Karl linked the openness of villagers to the Gospel in this area and others to the relative peacefulness of the time, as compared with the “political upheaval” of the 1940s (103). In mentioning the “political upheaval” of the previous decade, the family writers of Karl’s memoir referred to the rebellion of 1947, one of the most violent episodes in French colonial history in Madagascar.

During World War II, even while French intrusion in daily life decreased in many regions, the French demanded considerable resources from Malagasy people for the war effort (Cole 2001:61-63). It was in this context that an independence movement, the Democratic Movement for Malagasy Renewal (*Mouvement pour la Démocratique Rénovation Malgache*), organized during the war. On March 29, 1947, a planned rebellion began against French colonial rule, during which time Malagasy rebels assailed French administrative centers, garrisons, and Malagasy sympathizers to the French regime. Throughout the French-declared period of rebellion, from March 1947 until December 1948, Malagasy rebels killed some 550 French administrators and colons. Deploying Senegalese and Moroccan soldiers within the country, the French responded to the rebellion with bombing campaigns of some villages, executions, and tortures that killed at least 100,000 Malagasy (Tronchon 1986 cited in Cole 2001:61). Some people fled their homes to escape French retaliation or the atrocities perpetrated by rebels and succumbed to starvation. Cole (2001:62) notes, citing Covell (1989), that the effects of the rebellion “siege” did not end in some areas until 1956. The rebellion prompted a

period of French “recolonization” throughout the country that ushered in a new set of policies and tightened administrative surveillance of local populations (Cole 2001:63).

The revival of the 1950s in the Ampanihy district might best be interpreted in the context of the rebellion aftermath. Cole (2001), building upon the work of other scholars (Feeley-Harnik 1991; Lambek 2002), observes that ancestral rituals in Madagascar have played a crucial role in social regeneration in the midst of French colonial incursion into Malagasy daily life. Through ancestral spirits, Malagasy have responded to social change and learned how to adapt local ways of life during periods of struggle and intrusion. The widespread possessions witnessed by Karl Olsen during his trip to Antanandranto may have been one way that villagers dealt with the violence of the rebellion and the disruptions it posed to their way of life. Through spirit possession, villagers could establish continuity with ancestral kin, seek advice and counsel from ancestors, and reestablish everyday practices that may have been suspended during the rebellion.

In short, the revival periods that now compose part of the *fifohazana* movement as a whole, ones frequently characterized by widespread possessions prior to conversion, should be examined carefully in light of colonial history in Madagascar and the varying experiences of colonial rule within particular villages, towns, and regions. Karl’s interpretation of the revival largely focused on the historical continuity of the revival with Christian practices in the church, rather than looking at the revival as a practice continuous in some ways with other non-Christian practices within Mahafaly villages.

Discontinuity between the Fifohazana and Ancestral Practices

By attributing all possession to the demonic, the *fifohazana* movement severs the emergence of the ancestors who become known through spirit possession. As Meyer (1999) observes of Pentecostal sects in Ghana, demon possession manifests some of the conflicts and tensions that exist in daily life for Peki Ewe Christians between the indigenous religion and the Christian faith. Within the deliverance ritual of demon possession, the embodied return to and subsequent rupture from the constructed past of indigenous practices provides an acknowledgement of the social responsibilities that people have to their families, which often were evoked through spirits that operated among blood ties (214). Meyer argues, "Ewe Christians have recourse to time as an epistemological category which enables them to draw a rift between 'us' and 'them,' 'now' and 'then,' 'modern' and 'traditional' and, of course, 'God' and the 'Devil'" (214).

In his account of the *fifohazana*, Rakotojoelinandrasana (2002: 22) links the antagonism between indigenous practices concerning the ancestors and the revival to the fact that Rainisoalambo and Ravelonjanahary had been indigenous healers themselves and made their decisive break with these healing practices into one of the underlying tenets of the movement. In each prophet's biography, the severance of ties with indigenous ritualists marked a personal rupture from past family practices. Rakotozandry's family, Lutheran Christians for three to four generations, frequented an *ombiasa* for healing prior to his conversion experience. Nenilava's father was a king of her clan who was simultaneously a priest, diviner, and healer, practices she later denounced through her involvement with the revival. When comparing the *toby*s of the *fifohazana* with healing approaches espoused by African Independent Churches (AIC) in

South Africa, Rakotojoelinandrasana identifies one key difference in the *fifohazana*'s greater collaboration with biomedical services in Madagascar; furthermore, in his opinion, the revival in Madagascar would on the whole condemn the AICs use of holy water, holy wool, ashes, and the interpretation of dreams in ritual practices, which he sees as "vestiges of the traditional religion" that esteem "magical power" over that of Jesus Christ (74-75).

The revival's *mpiandry* (shepherds), trained healer-preachers, staff *toby* where people receive long-term spiritual and physical healing for their ailments, including mental illness.[66] According to Rasolondraibe (1998: 140), often in the *toby* "sickness is explained as either an indication of a broken relationship between the patient (including his/her family) and the course of life or an attack of the demonic on the faith of its patient and a challenge to the Christian community and its Lord." Revival exorcists see their work as one of "support and strengthening/empowering" (*asa ny fampaherezana*), which includes two worship services per day at the Ambohibao *toby*. The "work of empowering" also involves counseling (*dinidinika*) interviews with the patients and their kin, who all reside together at the *toby*, to establish the extent, causes, and context of their ailments.

Within the Ambohibao *toby*, the worship services culminate in a proclamation of God's forgiveness of sins and the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Rakotojoelinandrasana 2002: 71). The person leading the service declares, "Your sins are forgiven. Receive the Holy Spirit" (*Voavela ny helokao. Raiso ny FanahyMasina*). According to Rakotojoelinandrasana, a trained *mpiandry* in the movement, "The revival … is enacting

[66] In 1994, one development worker in the American Lutheran mission estimated that over 5,000 *mpiandry* existed in the Malagasy Lutheran Church alone (Memo from T. Berkas to Rev. O. Sletto, Sept. 25, 1994, ELCA Archives Chicago).

and promoting a 'ritual of possession by the Holy Spirit'" (2002: 83). Rather than exorcism, Rakotojoelinandrasana prefers the term "deliverance ministry" in English to emphasize the patient's deliverance (or virtual rebirth) from the demonic forces that held control over the person's being. In this process, he classes as demon possession experiences otherwise considered spirit possession (often by the royal dead or *tromba* spirits) outside the Christian religion and semantically reinscribes the Christian ritual of infilling by the Holy Spirit as the true realization of spirit possession.

For fifohazana adherents in Madagascar, the Christian "deliverance ministry" from demon possession presents one resolution to these conflicting temporal orientations and reaffirms the Christian social identity of the formerly possessed and the ritual participants by promoting an infilling of the Holy Spirit (Rakotojoelinandrasana 2002:83). Rakotojoelinandrasana (2002:98) suggests that the deliverance ministry is in many respects an historical symbol of the battle between God and Satan; from his perspective, it represents the way that Christ has already fought and won this battle, thereby making the deliverance into an historical episode that unfolds in the present.

Fifohazana revivalists teach that demons circulate freely through the air and pose threats to the person anywhere and at any time in their ability to attack through the imagination and through forms of temptation. Evil forces operate seamlessly across the body's boundaries and Euro-American divisions between mind and body (Rakotojoelinandrasana 2002: 68, 71). Sharp (1999: 173) notes that the Presbyterian Church of Jesus Christ of Madagascar (*Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasasikara*, FJKM) and the Malagasy Lutheran Church have become known among those affiliated with the *fifohazana* as the most actively involved in performing exorcisms.

To summarize, in remembering the *fifohazana*, missionaries now involved with the Lutheran Renewal movement in Minnesota align the revival with their religious commitment to personal sanctification through faith and to follow the "true church" of the first Christians. In fact, it is often the case that they dig "deeper" into the historical past and identify their own ancestors' Norwegian pietism with their contemporary embrace of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit and the substantial lay involvement characterized by the *fifohazana*, nineteenth-century Norwegian Lutheran pietism, and the Lutheran Renewal movement. Ned attributed the historical tensions among missionaries on the subject of the revival to their differing approaches to the Lutheran faith.

At least in the southwest surrounding Ampanihy, missionaries like Karl Olsen perceived revival periods, now understood to comprise the *fifohazana,* as practices continuous with the prayer and service of the first Malagasy pastor Dada Olafa and Malagasy congregants in the region. I indicated that this account does not address how the revival may have been related to the social and political events of the time, namely the 1947 colonial rebellion in Madagascar. This account also reinforces the discontinuity that revivalists and supportive church members observe between ancestral practices, especially spirit possession, and the *fifohazana*, where all possession is attributed to the demonic. Karl Olsen's account suggests that a more ambivalent relationship may have existed for Mahafaly villagers between the revival and service to the ancestors and thus leaves unanswered questions that further research on specific revival periods in southern Madagascar could address.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, for many missionaries, the incorporation of the *tobys* into the biomedical services of the Malagasy Lutheran health department in the

1980s represented an indigenization of the biblical teachings on healing and the successful combination of biomedical and Malagasy approaches to healing through a dominant Christian paradigm. The alleged inferiority of Malagasy approaches to healing (*fanafody-gasy*) in relation to biomedicine had been part of the rhetoric of the mission in its early stages (and in some cases into the present). The indigenous healer or *ombiasa* was long portrayed as the mission's primary opposition to the spreading of the gospel. The incorporation of the *tobys* into the FLM's health care department is thus seen by many retired missionaries as part of an historical progression of Christianity within Madagascar, whereby Malagasy healing practices came to be seen as part of a Malagasy Lutheran holistic theology of salvation (Rakotojoelinandrasana 2002:110).

The Minneapolis Shepherds: The Fifohazana and Lutheran Renewal

One Malagasy Lutheran named Emmanuel who played a role in shaping this transformation came to the United States in the late 1990s to attend the Lutheran seminary in St. Paul. Emmanuel, in his early 50s with a stocky build and short salt-and-pepper hair, was not only a medical doctor but also a trained *mpiandry* since 1976 in the *fifohazana* movement whose family came from Betafo in the central highlands of Madagascar. After completing his seminary training as well as a doctorate of ministry in St. Paul, Emmanuel took on a variety of positions at churches in the Twin Cities area while seeking a full-time position as senior pastor. Following years apart while he was in seminary, Emmanuel's wife, also a trained *mpiandry* since 1976 and an ordained minister in the FJKM for over fifteen years, joined him in 2004 in the Twin Cities with two of their four children.

The couple's 23-year-old daughter Mazava, who had been living in Antananarivo, also came to Minneapolis/St. Paul with a student visa in 2006. With her father's local contacts and guidance, she had applied and been accepted to a small inter-denominational missions college located in a south Minneapolis suburb. My impression of the college at the time was that it attracted a number of students who disagreed with the teachings of mainline seminaries, such as Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul. The people I had met in Minneapolis/St. Paul who attended the college voiced the belief that seminary training tends to over-intellectualize the tenets of faith, often causing pastors-in-training to abstract their faith from daily life rather than practice it. Pastor Ned told me on one occasion that Lutheran charismatics are the minority at the Luther Seminary in St. Paul and he expressed concern that their social and theological views became largely overshadowed by more liberal, ELCA professors and classmates. Through her seminary training, Mazava told me she wanted to learn how to organize and support revival meetings. She hoped to spark a revival in Madagascar that was patterned on a Billy Graham crusade with large worship meetings that brought thousands of people together.

During 2005-2006, in addition to a "cross-cultural" house church, Emmanuel led both a healing ministry and an addiction counseling and support group with a biblical basis at a multiethnic suburban Minneapolis church called Good Shepherd Lutheran. This post drew upon his extensive training in substance abuse counseling at Hazelden in Minnesota (in 1987) and his work for SALFA (1982-86, 1988-94) on chemical dependency in Madagascar. Emmanuel's healing ministry involved monthly services at the congregation in suburban Minneapolis, which took a holistic approach to treating

"emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual problems" with prayer, the casting out of demons, and anointing with oil.

Three distinct groups of laity occupied the suburban church, which belongs to the theologically conservative, pietistic Association of Free Lutheran Congregations: a largely white population that had been members of the church for years, an African-American church that met separately, and a Chinese American congregation that also used the building for worship at separate times. Filling in at the church on a temporary basis, Ned hoped to merge these three congregations that met inside the same building, yet did not worship together. But he expressed to me in a May 2006 interview that he wasn't sure how to do this and noted that the largely white congregation wasn't quite "ready" for widespread transformation in its worship practices, which would in the very least need to be bilingual. Ned asked Emmanuel to develop the healing ministry in the hopes that it might spark greater involvement and unity among the congregants. While Good Shepherd is not a member of the Lutheran Renewal movement, the church is recognized by Ned and others as belonging to another independent Lutheran movement in Minneapolis/St. Paul (Association of Free Lutheran Congregations) that is open to charismatic practices.

Locating in the sprawling northwest suburb of Bakersville, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church sits along a divided highway that boasts a sprinkling of fast-food restaurants with drive-up windows, "speedy" oil change shops, a Radisson hotel and conference center, and gas stations. Vast stretches of bright green grass and small planted trees line the divided highway and the perimeter of the fast-food restaurants, suggesting the town planners wished to create a pleasingly manicured natural environment despite

heavy car and truck traffic. Good Shepherd looks to have been built long before many of these suburban chain businesses were established; its A-frame construction dates the style of the structure to the 1960s or slightly earlier. Since that time, Bakersville has grown around it as a primary middle-class suburb of Minneapolis.

Emmanuel's healing services at Good Shepherd were primarily attended by Euro-American laypeople. He trained some of the congregants to anoint with oil, lay hands in prayer, and perform home blessings, a special program that involved visiting families living in the immediate neighborhoods surrounding the church. The healing program resembled the spiritual care offered by *mpiandry* (shepherds) within the *fifohazana* movement in certain respects. During the two healing services I attended (which focused upon the theme printed in the program, "Jesus Still Heals Today"), Pastor Emmanuel referred to a group of eight trained healer-preachers as "shepherds." Working in pairs, the shepherds spread out in four small circles across the front of the altar where they stood ready to pray with any congregants who requested their counsel. When the service transitioned from Emmanuel's sermon to the period of healing, soft classical music began playing over the loudspeaker system; people gradually moved forward from their pews individually or with others; and they prayed and talked together with the shepherds, oftentimes in tearful exchanges, at the front of the sanctuary for about twenty minutes.

Emmanuel and the shepherds emphasized the presence and authority of Jesus at each meeting through selected hymns; Bible passages that were read by the shepherds to the congregants; and the sermon, which was titled the "message and exhortation[: a] proclamation of Jesus' authority for healing and deliverance." Through linguistic deixis, spatial imagery, and the visible features of the sanctuary, the presence of Christ was

carefully tied to the immediate experience of the service. The services opened with a period of sung worship, during which time a young man led the congregation in song on an acoustic guitar and the hymn lyrics were projected on a white screen behind the altar. The hymns drew attention to the embodiment of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, comparing in sung lyrics the Spirit to the "air that I breathe"; a romantic beau fanning the "flames within my soul"; a "shield about me"; and "Your holy presence living in me."

The healing services also established historical continuity between the Jesus of the Bible and the present Jesus, suggesting analogously that the congregants were disciples. During the August 2006 service, the welcoming church member cited Matthew 18:20, which affirms that Jesus will be present where two or three Christians are gathered "in His name." The church member told the group of more than twenty assembled congregants, "We do believe the Lord is here among us." Emmanuel noted in the July 2006 message that it was the "same Jesus as in Palestine" that was "here tonight with us through the Holy Spirit." He pointed to the cross behind him, framed by the sanctuary's vaulted ceiling, and said, "We as human beings are nothing, nothing … *All* is to Jesus Christ." During the August service, Emmanuel suggested that evil spirits could also be present within the church and verbally addressed them to cast them off as his message was nearing a close. "Bind Satan. You don't have power, authority here. Bind you evil spirits … go away." These verbal assaults on evil form a predominant technique of spiritual warfare (*tafika masina*) within the *fifohazana* and constitute familiar language within evangelical American Christian practices against evil, both of which base their approach on the accounts of the Christian authority for "binding" or forbidding in Matthew 16:19 and Matthew 12:28,29.

Emmanuel carefully defined the power of Christian healing in relation to two problems, that of biomedicine and what he called "magic." First, in a way that suggested he sensed some laypeople may be unfamiliar with prayer healing, Emmanuel verified the legitimacy of Christian healing by contrasting it with "magic" and assured the congregants that the healing services were not spurious or inauthentic "magical meetings." Secondly, he urged those present to "give [their] burdens" and sin to Jesus in prayer, but cautioned that healing may not occur like a medical cure, through "one shot of prayer." Rather, it was necessary to develop a long-term "loving relationship with Jesus, the living and healing God" for healing to take place. Clarifying the relationship of prayer and biomedicine, Emmanuel told the congregants that their participation in the healing service should not preclude them from taking prescribed medicines, a point also written in the program, since "Jesus might also use medicines to heal." Drawing upon his experience as a medical doctor, Emmanuel recounted how he hung a sign in his office during his twelve years of practicing medicine in Madagascar that further clarified the relationship of biomedicine and healing, as translated in English: "I treat, but Jesus heals."

Emmanuel and I talked about the healing services on a separate occasion in the second-floor conference room at Good Sheperd, while his daughter Mazava chatted with friends in Madagascar on his office computer down the hall. Mazava had just arrived in the U.S. the previous week from Antananarivo (Tana), where she had been living and studying at the public university since her parents left the country. When I traveled to Madagascar in November-December 2005, I met Mazava and her fiancée in Tana and gave her a series of carefully wrapped packages from her parents in suburban

Minneapolis. On this particular day, Mazava had accompanied her father to his office in suburban Minneapolis so she and I could spend the afternoon together and I could return the favor of Mazava's guidance in Tana by showing her around my Minneapolis neighborhood.

In the church conference room, Emmanuel explained to me that the "basic pattern is biblical" for the healing services and said that he has made an effort to describe within each service why "we do things [and] what the Bible says about it" in order to "progress to the same understanding" within the congregation. "The Holy Spirit is the same here as in Madagascar," Emmanuel said initially and then corrected to "almost the same." The primary difference he identified within the healing service in suburban Minneapolis and comparable ones in Madagascar lies in the casting out of demons. Emmanuel sat a little deeper in his seat, his body slightly shifting downward to signal a certain subtlety and delicacy. He said he performs the phrase to cast out the demon "softly" – "in the name of Jesus Christ, leave" – and noted that he locates the act in a semi-private, more concealed space near the altar as compared with the more visible casting out of demons in church services in Madagascar.

From Emmanuel's perspective, this difference was due to the congregants' lack of cultural familiarity with exorcism, typically not performed within American Lutheran churches. But he also suggested that his techniques responded to a notable divergence in the activity of demons and, by extension, the Holy Spirit in the American context. Rather than focusing upon these differences, Emmanuel emphasized that the "common denominator" of the experience was how it addressed the "needs" of the people through unity in the Holy Spirit and through looking to Jesus as God's "answer to human

problems." He identified himself as a missionary (or *missionnaire* as he said in French at the time) to people in Minneapolis, someone who was able to bring his cultural knowledge to bear in a new context.

Emmanuel characterized the practices of the Minneapolis shepherds, modeled on the *mpiandry* of the *fifohazana*, as techniques that could repair emotional, physical, and relational difficulties. He pitted the problems and burdens of the congregants, part of the legacy of human sin, against the salvation history of Jesus Christ. Emmanuel used this history, evoked, embodied, and symbolized through anointed oil, prayers, and blessings, to "deliver" the congregants from their hardships. This act ultimately reaffirmed a Christian resolution to human problems and enabled each participant to embody the healing power of Christ through the Holy Spirit, whether by oil placed on the forehead or prayer that evoked the divine presence within each service.

Conclusion

The *fifohazana* movement plays a crucial role in reorienting time, both for its Malagasy adherents as well as for lifelong American foreign missionaries to Madagascar. The *fifohazana* requires Malagasy adherents to break with service to the ancestors. The "deliverance ministry" symbolizes some of the tensions adherents may negotiate between the ancestral service and their commitment to the revival. Healing practices espoused by the revival present the salvation history of Jesus Christ as an embodied past that may repair the human "problems" of the present, for both *fifohazana* adherents in Madagascar and Lutherans in suburban Minneapolis.

According to one modernist narrative among American missionaries, the *fifohazana* brings together several distinctive changes in Malagasy society, religion, and

politics to produce a forward-looking Christian nation that emerged from a past of non-Christian practices and socialist government. By virtue of the "sacrifices" of living and dead missionaries, retired missionaries merge their own life histories with the contemporary national prominence of the *fifohazana*. In their telling, these narratives empower their possessors as they bring together disparate moments and events into a seamless movement that reaches forward and backward in time (Peel 1995). As J.D.Y. Peel (1995:584) notes, "The more potent narratives have the capacity to incorporate other agents, so that they become accessories to the authors of the narratives." *Fifohazana* narratives exercise this power of telling and the power of orienting people, events, and places into a selectively organized sequence.

My evidence indicates the importance of paying close attention to both the form and the context of the telling of the past. Within the reunion presentation, the report on the *fifohazana* movement deployed a specific rhetorical form that was a familiar expression of unity within the Lutheran liturgy. Additionally, people indicated that the perceived context of the reunion structured their participation in specific ways. This was reinforced through a separate incident at the March 2005 reunion. One retired missionary pastor gave an hour-long presentation at the reunion on why *not* to support the ordination of gay and lesbian church members in the August 2005 churchwide assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. [67] In later conversational uptake, I heard from

[67] On August 12, 2005, delegates at the ELCA churchwide assembly in Orlando rejected a proposal to allow the ordination of gay and lesbian church members as clergy, with 49 percent in favor to 51 percent opposed. The narrow margin for the proposal vote reflected the divisiveness of and long-standing debate on the issue. Many people perceived the issue of gay and lesbian ordination as one which threatened to split apart the church. Congregations with a majority opposition to the proposal had threatened to leave the ELCA should the proposal pass. The ELCA is not the only mainline American Protestant denomination to struggle internally with heated debate on the issue of gay and lesbian ordination. As Goodstein (2005: A7) writes,

several reunion participants that his presentation and its inclusion in the reunion program was troubling to them. One person noted that it was "insensitive," since some of the missionaries who were present have gay and lesbian children. When I asked them why they did not speak up at the time, my interlocutors said they feared their disagreement would create conflict in an occasion (the reunion) that was "meant to be about fellowship." Thus, the reunion presentations not only created specific roles for participants, who could inhabit a statement resembling a liturgical confession, but might have also silenced dissenting voices. For participants, it was an awareness of the specific kind of event (one "about fellowship") that the reunion strove to be that kept their own participation in line with the performance of this context.

Additionally, *fifohazana* accounts articulate positions in an unfolding "moral economy of self-identification" among adherents of Christian varieties (Hefner 1993:25). The story of the *fifohazana* set forth at the reunion presupposed the movement's definitive rupture with Malagasy divination and spirit possession and aligned the *fifohazana's* inclusion in the Malagasy Lutheran Church with the national political role of Christianity in Madagascar. In charting a linear narrative through its visual elements, the

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The United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church have upheld bans on ordaining noncelibate gay men and lesbians. The Episcopal Church U.S.A. approved the ordination of an openly noncelibate gay bishop in 2003. In the fallout, some congregations have left, and the Episcopal Church has been condemned by many of its affiliates in the worldwide Anglican communion.

The August 2005 ELCA assembly also voted to ban explicit blessing of same-sex unions, but interestingly voted at the same time to approve a more ambiguously-worded item which upheld pastors' ability to discern the most appropriate means of pastoral care for all of their congregants, seemingly leaving the door open for some to continue to sanction same-sex unions within approving congregations (Goodstein 2005). Thus, the resulting policies adopted by the ELCA assembly strove to unite a fractious church, approving a ban on gay and lesbian ordination without necessarily removing congregations' ability to independently act to welcome and sanction same-sex unions.

As of 2007, the church policy tacitly allows openly gay and lesbian pastors (who have already been ordained) but prohibits them from being in same-sex relationships. The church plans to put the issue of same-sex relationships to a vote at its biennial assembly in 2009. The possibility remains that 86 ELCA pastors nationwide who are in same-sex relationships could be "defrocked" or removed from the church roster at the 2009 assembly (Murphy 2007:M42).

reunion presentation overshadowed divergent missionary positions on the *fifohazana*, but perhaps even more importantly on the contemporary pursuit of the Great Commission, a source of disagreement within American Lutheranism.

While the *fifohazana* modeled the "charismatic" forms of worship that Hank and Ned saw as crucial for Lutheran renewal, others supported the *fifohazana* as a Malagasy "indigenous" expression of Christianity. Although each relied differently upon the construction of post-coloniality as a distinctive temporal and political orientation, these perspectives fundamentally suggested that many Lutheranisms have existed among missionaries to Madagascar, reflecting their divergent family histories, doctrinal and sectarian affiliations, and personal experiences (cf. Larson 1997). In the face of an institutional "break with the past," missionaries have identified continuity in other Lutheran practices, including those of their Norwegian ancestors.

Paradoxically, by acknowledging the "outsider" status that they believed the ELCA had ascribed to them, some missionaries reinforced their own centrality in biblical terms within the church, as the missionary chairman, Hank, suggested in the opening passage of this chapter. Christian social identity thrives through the middle ground between a sequence of polar opposites and conflicting orientations to the world: insider and outsider, temporal and spiritual, exiled and incorporated. The recognition of one's status as an institutional "exile," disenfranchised from the established church, may only have heightened the awareness of participating in a Christian movement that identified the denominational bureaucracy with stasis, legalism, and the absence of vibrant communication with the divine.

Spoken and written accounts of the missionary "past" stake a claim on the establishment of an authoritative legacy, as well as upon what the future holds for Lutheran practitioners. The moral and political struggle inherent in this process is one played out in an emergent global Christian landscape in which charismatic Lutherans – an authoritative segment of the "missionary family" represented at the reunion – align themselves with the growing worldwide prominence of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianities, differentiating themselves from what they term a "liberal Christianity" that betrayed the missionary mandate contained in the epistles of Paul. Some see not an end to mission work in the legacy of American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar but instead a directive for continued involvement through church-led short-term mission projects to the country and new forms of evangelism that target "unreached people groups."

CHAPTER 5:
"NO JUNK FOR JESUS": THE MORAL ECONOMY OF USE, WASTE, AND NEED IN LUTHERAN MEDICAL AID ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

Through the establishment of two Lutheran medical aid organizations in Minneapolis/St. Paul, former missionaries and their families have cultivated a moral relationship of "accompaniment" with the Malagasy Lutheran Church (*Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy* or FLM). As outgrowths of the American Lutheran medical mission to Madagascar, both Malagasy Partnership (est.1980) and International Health Mission (est.1987) supply donated biomedical materials to former mission hospitals and dispensaries that fall under the jurisdiction of the FLM's medical division. The island-wide Malagasy Lutheran health care department (*Sampan'asa Loterana Momba Ny Fahasalamana,* SALFA), instituted in 1979 in the capital city Antananarivo, has shared a close relationship with both organizations since their inception. Malagasy Partnership dispatches collected medical items solely to SALFA, while IHM finances a portion of Malagasy Partnership's overseas shipping, pharmaco-therapy for patients in small communal treatment centers called *toby* (Malagasy, lit., camp), medical training and continuing education programs, and medical and dental equipment.

Faith-based non-profits, I suggest, have become more widely accepted global actors than foreign missionaries among members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America (ELCA). As I described in the Introduction, these organizations follow the ELCA goal of establishing "partnerships" in global mission work. Malagasy Partnership and International Health Mission form part of a recently established and cross-denominational network of more than 100 Christian health care organizations in the United States, known collectively as Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare or TECH. Although each agency responds differently to the late twentieth-century reconceptualization of mission work among American Christians, their emergence and expansion partly builds upon recent funding opportunities that the U.S. government has opened for faith-based organizations. The controversial Faith-Based Initiative of the George W. Bush administration, which funds some but not all of their programming, prompts a series of questions about the constitutional separation of church and state, which I return to in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Foreign missionaries, serving as interpreters and representatives for American congregants, formerly occupied the role of intermediary in the relationship between the members of the ELCA and overseas churches. Due to the gradual dissolution of the ELCA foreign mission establishment between 1970 and 1990, missionaries no longer occupy this mediating role. In their absence, certain material forms have come to play a heightened role for American Lutheran believers in mediating how they imagine the Christian social world and how they establish new models of social relations as a response to the colonial legacy of the foreign mission movement. I examine the interpretive dilemmas that arise from this social transformation within the remaining two chapters of the dissertation.

In this chapter, I focus upon how Lutherans in Minnesota work to establish and define a "moral economy" of worldly engagement through the medical supplies they acquire and package (Frow 1997:124). Aid workers in Minnesota reshape the medical supplies they receive from Midwest hospitals into specially "called" things and imbue them with qualities of Christian disposition and personhood. This process of reconstitution has three primary facets that I explore in turn: re-evaluating the relationship of waste or trash and morally dangerous wastefulness; associating "junk" medical supplies with human sinfulness; and constructing the subjective recognition of "need" through the supply exchanges as one step in the formation of a Christian social consciousness. These practices may be characterized as life-giving in that they transform things that were once considered to be disposable waste by others, while enabling the volunteer workers to re-imagine the social relations of the global church. Although aid workers participate in the medical supplies' reconstitution, I argue that they do not irreversibly transform the medical donations into completely new things. Traces of the past loom in different forms and signs as specters, or absent presences, of the things, much as in the relations of American Lutherans and their "overseas partners."

For American Lutheran church members, missionaries were multifaceted figures associated with the saving of persons and forms of personhood, performing a range of subsidiary duties associated with "saving" that are conveyed through the etymologically related terms salvage and heal. While the missionary promotion of household and personal commodities has sparked a large scholarly literature that analyzes the underlying tensions of the "civilizing mission" (see, e.g., Comaroff 1996; Grimshaw 1997), their circulation of material things on behalf of congregants who remained at home has been

discussed less frequently. As part of the religious collective, Midwestern churchgoers periodically sent things as gifts to American Lutheran missionaries in the hope that these items would aid the missionaries in pursuing their work overseas. Many of these missionary gifts were household goods that had been specially made or repurposed for the mission field, such as bandages made from bedsheets that I discuss in Chapter 6.

Underlying this exchange was the notion that the receiving American missionaries could convert these things into useful goods, giving them a new life within the mission field and shaping what they received into what they needed. Missionaries enabled their American co-religionists, at least through the distance between the Midwest and the mission field, to convert a potentially negative behavior (waste or disposal) into something positive and self-affirming (a charitable donation or gift). As I describe further below, the medical non-profits criticize this model of charitable giving, which they associate with the past, and endeavor to develop a Christian social consciousness among American Lutherans that values intelligent and informed aid above the simple act of donation.[68]

Yet in the process of refining and fostering this Christian social consciousness, the non-profits encounter another interpretive dilemma that arises due to the absence of missionaries in a role they formerly filled within the church institution. As representatives of the church, missionaries translated the specific "needs" of the world, as they experienced them, into the collective pursuits of the unified American Lutheran

[68] I use the term "Christian social consciousness" throughout this chapter rather than "Lutheran social consciousness." The primary reason for this is because three Malagasy Partnership volunteers once told me in conversation that they view their work with the agency ultimately as a "God thing" rather than only a "Lutheran thing." They belong to Lutheran churches, but emphasize their personal relationship with God as a more foundational part of their experience and identity than the fact that they are Lutherans. While volunteers at IHM also described themselves as "Christians," they perhaps more frequently talked about the central role of Lutheranism in their lives. This may have been due to the generational difference between the volunteers at the two organizations, as I describe later in the chapter.

church. Through extensive letter-writing, contractual presentations, and correspondence with the church office, individual missionaries organized the financial and spiritual resources of the church members around particular worldly "needs." The social construction of need has long been a religious language among missionaries and their supporters, which serves to locate the moral responsibility of the church within the landscape of the world.[69] Without missionaries in this mediating role, the needs of the world have become as varied, multifaceted, and seemingly limitless as the pursuit of global mission. Since the missionary vocation has been largely de-professionalized in the latter half of the twentieth century, the mission undertaking is now conventionally understood by ELCA Lutherans to be found in the personal relationships that lay church members establish in their volunteerism, rather than primarily through the collective institution.

The faith-based organizations, therefore, fill some of the interpretive shoes of missionaries, as global actors, while aiming to transform how American Lutherans relate to church members overseas. Within each agency, aid workers engage an array of donated medical materials, from intravenous catheters to hospital beds, in a process of reconstitution that has moral, economic, and sacred qualities (Strasser 1999:3,8; Frow 2003:35; Hetherington 2004:159). In many respects, the medical materials occupy a transitional status since they, like other disposables, have been singularized or "pulled out

[69] In using the term "religious language," I follow the work of Webb Keane (1997, 2004). He defines religious language as the linguistic practices "that are taken *by practitioners themselves* to be marked or unusual in such a way as to suggest they involve entities or modes of agency which are considered by those practitioners to be consequentially distinct from more 'ordinary' experience, or situated across some sort of ontological divide from something understood as a more everyday 'here and now'" (2004:431, italics in original).

of their usual commodity sphere" within the biomedical institution (Kopytoff 1986:74). Kopytoff (1986:76) notes:

> Unless formally decommoditized, commoditized things remain potential commodities – they continue to have an exchange value, even if they have been effectively withdrawn from their exchange sphere and deactivated, so to speak, as commodities.

Through this process of temporary deactivation, aid workers emphasize that the medical supplies donations are gifts from God, or specially "called" things. Yet it is important to note that the medical supply transactions, even as they hold qualities of gift exchange for Minnesota volunteers, are predicated upon the unequal relations of capitalist accumulation. In many respects, these inequalities become the groundwork of possibility for the gift exchange. Therefore, commodity and gift exchange should be seen as inseparably tied or "entangled" together in the medical supply transactions (Mauss 1950[1990]:66; Frow 1997:123; Thomas 1991:32).

At least temporarily removed from circulation for exchange-value but still carrying its potential, the donated supplies become valued through their use-value for practitioners overseas. Among the Minnesota aid workers, it is believed that the medical supplies should reflect their ethical practice, or the selection and accumulation of predominantly *useful* things. By establishing the negative value of non-useful supplies ("junk") and the absence of knowledge in such exchanges, aid workers indicate that ethical practice entails not simply action but a particular kind of attentive and informed activity, or the ability to "act with discretion" in the words of the IHM executive director. This refinement of charitable giving becomes apparent within both organizations: supplies are labeled "junk" when they are not suitable for use overseas. Moreover, as I have observed, some IHM volunteers like Lois, a former missionary to Madagascar,

believe that materials should not become waste shortly after being donated, a perspective that places value in the durability of the international relations produced through the medical supply exchanges. The value of the medical supplies derives from their ability to continue circulating outside of the Minnesota warehouses.

At the same time, through their reconstitution and physical handling in Minnesota, the medical supplies become signs and elements of the moral personhood of their handlers. The underlying notion, reinforced by the voluntary association, is that the individual cannot alone be a full moral person but comes into being through relationships with others. The medical supply transactions are premised upon this multi-layered work of incorporation into the moral collective. While each aid worker imbues the medical supplies with their physical labor, the materials become signs for the process of yielding the self to the sacred and worldly collective. In salvaging, collecting, and sorting medical supplies, these volunteers participate in the future potential of the healing process, a metonym for the salvation to be found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Moreover, the non-profits construct themselves as collective moral persons through the ideal accumulation of carefully selected and thoughtfully informed supplies. These materials build not just any collective but redefine the kind of church, in the sense of a being a united body in the world, that the aid workers participate in together. The medical materials offer ways for volunteer workers to imaginatively construct and reflect upon the collective body in human form, since their contours and shapes suggest its absent presence. For some, their participation in the non-profit precisely extends to them the opportunity “to be a part of the body,” as one man phrased it, or to be disciples who accompany Christ on his earthly journey.

"Faithful Partners": Making New Collectives into Moral Persons

Although they exist separately today, International Health Mission and Malagasy Partnership began as part of the same initiative. Financial support for ELCA medical missions decreased in the United States in the early-mid 1980s as the cost of medical care rose internationally. Medical practitioners in overseas Lutheran clinics, both national physicians and American missionaries, found it difficult to complete medical procedures with increasingly outdated equipment and a dearth of basic medical supplies. Together with their U.S.-based supporters, they established an independent Lutheran organization in Minneapolis in 1987 that collected medical supplies otherwise discarded by the American biomedical establishment.[70] The organization was patterned by its founders after the Medical Benevolence Foundation, which formed in 1963 to furnish Presbyterian Church clinics around the world with American biomedical surplus. Lynn, a short-term volunteer medical missionary to Madagascar and Norwegian-American Lutheran, was one member of this small group of former Lutheran missionaries and their supporters. Lynn filed the legal paperwork to make International Health Mission a non-profit organization in Minnesota, stored medical supplies in the basement of his home in IHM's early years, and continued to be involved with the organization as a board member.

As IHM continued to grow in size, Lynn maintained Malagasy Partnership as a separate organization that sent materials only to Madagascar and gradually lessened his

[70] Although it is an independent Lutheran agency, IHM cooperates with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its Companion Synod Program. Under this program, which began in 1988, the church pairs Lutheran synods together that participate in the Lutheran World Federation (Lubawa 2007). Congregants make exchange visits and complete service projects for their "companions," which sometimes includes packaging medical supplies at IHM for hospitals that exist within the companion synod. The Companion Synod Program formed in the wake of the dissolution of the American Lutheran foreign missionary establishment. It was one initiative that aimed to reinstate "global concern" for American congregants without the unequal relations presumed to accompany foreign mission work.

involvement with IHM. Lynn implied this was crucial to how he wanted to operate Malagasy Partnership. In interviews, conversations, and prayer sessions in the organization's warehouse, he continually presented the work of Malagasy Partnership as not simply one of collecting medical items but of building personal relationships between American Christians and Malagasy Christians. He taught volunteers to recognize Malagasy Lutheran physicians by name, focus their prayers on medical professionals in the SALFA clinics, and support one another in their lives outside the warehouse, such as with job searches, school classes, ill relatives, and troubled relationships. Inside the small office of the Malagasy Partnership building was a white "prayer board" with a list of prayer concerns hand-written in colored marker. Each week the prayer board was updated with fresh requests and the items listed on it were incorporated into spoken supplications during a group prayer circle. Additionally, as part of a reciprocal "prayer covenant," the Minnesota group prayed for Malagasy physicians and SALFA employees each Thursday night, knowing that they would just be awaking in Madagascar to begin a new day of work.

In 1977-1978, Lynn and his wife Julie, both medical professionals, had trained Malagasy medical laboratory technicians in clinics operated by SALFA. After they returned to Minnesota, Lynn and Julie were approached by another missionary couple, Norman and Rose, with whom they had worked in Madagascar and were asked to help secure medical supplies for SALFA. Initially, they assisted Norman by finding parts for an x-ray machine but gradually more people grew aware that they were collecting medical materials to send overseas. Some missionaries, living in transitional housing on

the grounds of Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, donated their garage spaces to the effort.

In the early 1980s, Lynn and his wife officially adopted the project as an activity of their "home bible study cell," or parachurch care group, which began meeting in conjunction with their ELCA Lutheran congregation in Lakewood, Minnesota. "When we were there" in the early 1980s, Lynn said, certain "families ate together, had holidays together," took bike rides, and raised their children together. The families were "always interested in doing help things." Sometimes the children volunteered first and their parents followed later. For Lynn, Julie, and their three children, the time spent with the other families was based on their "closeness" and as much about "just being together" as completing a service project. Their bible study cell initially filled barrels and crates to send to Madagascar, but eventually collected enough donations to rent a small warehouse building for Malagasy Partnership in Lakewood. Today the organization sends four transatlantic sea containers each year to the port city of Tamatave, Madagascar, where the shipments are processed by customs officials and then transported by truck to Antananarivo.

By comparison, International Health Mission was in the process of expanding its facility and its shipping schedule exponentially during my fieldwork in 2005-2006. Following a large warehouse expansion in 2005 that doubled the original size of the facility, IHM planned to increase its annual shipping from the fourteen shipments it sent in 2005 to twenty-eight transatlantic sea containers, though it had not yet reached this goal at the close of my fieldwork. The agency had initially stored medical materials in volunteers' home basements, garages, storage units, and a borrowed space at a local

Christian college. After eight years without a permanent facility, IHM purchased its original warehouse building in 1995 in an industrial zone of Oakley, Minnesota, a northwestern Minneapolis suburb adjacent to Lakewood. In 2005, the agency bought a neighboring warehouse, which enabled the organization to increase its storage space by only breaking down the adjoining wall. IHM sent sea containers to Lutheran hospitals in Tanzania, Cameroon, Papua New Guinea, Liberia, and Nicaragua in 2005, and the enlargement of the IHM headquarters signaled its plan to send containers to other locations, including Bangladesh and southern India. [71] The fundraising campaign slogan for the building acquisition, "Expanding our borders, growing in mission," expressed this duality of physical and spiritual expansion.

Figure 5.1. The newly expanded IHM warehouse

[71] As I indicated earlier, in its early years, IHM sent regular transatlantic sea containers to SALFA in Madagascar. Today, with Malagasy Partnership sending these medical supplies, IHM primarily makes financial donations to SALFA for medical training programs and other public health development projects, while also contributing to the cost of ocean freight shipping incurred by Malagasy Partnership.

Volunteer labor unquestionably enables the daily operation of both organizations in Minnesota. While IHM employs four full-time office staff, it relies predominantly upon a 150-person volunteer workforce, averaging twenty people per work period, that does everything from packaging transatlantic sea container shipments of medical materials to installing the electrical wiring in the agency's headquarters.[72] IHM maintains an 18,000-member mailing list, with supporters across the United States. Malagasy Partnership is a much smaller organization than IHM by contrast, with an average of eight volunteers per regular Thursday night work session and possibly as many as twenty when a sea container is being packed for shipment. At IHM, most regular volunteers are third- or fourth-generation Euro-Americans who self-identify as Norwegian, Danish, Scandinavian, or German, depending upon their interlocutor. Malagasy Partnership has a multi-ethnic volunteer workforce, which includes Norwegian-American, Malagasy émigré, German-American, and Asian American participants during special container packing sessions but tends to vary by work period.

While both organizations stressed the equality of their "partnership" with overseas Lutheran churches, they did so in different ways. Lynn criticized the perspective of fellow believers who referred to overseas clinics as "mission hospitals." He avoided the term "mission" in part because it implied to him that the hospitals were still under the authority of the American church. Malagasy nationals ran SALFA institutions, he said, and must be recognized as the authorities of their health care system. Lynn worked to form direct relationships with Malagasy Lutherans, without relying upon American Lutheran intermediaries. Malagasy Partnership, he pointed out, was "one link in a chain"

[72] In quantitative terms, in 2005 volunteers worked more than 8,000 hours for IHM, the equivalent of seven full-time employees (Fieldnotes, 7 February 2006).

of God's construction. It built upon the easy access Americans had to medical surplus and attempted to redistribute some of these goods for the benefit of Christians elsewhere. In addition to his full-time job at a large Minneapolis hospital, Lynn personally conducted all the organization's e-mail communication with SALFA liaisons and medical suppliers in the United States. Malagasy Partnership volunteers were able to form relationships with SALFA employees through Lynn's personal familiarity with them, with the SALFA clinics, and with the Malagasy language.

International Health Mission likewise constructed its role as a "helping" assistant to health care programs of Lutheran churches in other countries.[73] In an interview with me, the chair of the IHM board of directors, a former medical missionary to Madagascar and child of missionaries to Madagascar, expressed her desire to not be a *"vazaha"* (Malagasy, foreigner/stranger/white person) who remained in Madagascar but to see that Malagasy nationals were fully in charge of their institutions and health care. This is a theme which came out again and again in her description of IHM's work, which she emphasized was "supportive." The position of IHM should be one of a "faithful partner," she said, appearing acutely aware of the power of language in conveying the ethical practice of Christian aid work.

American Consumption Practices and the Christian Moral Critique of Capitalism

The non-profits occupy an ambivalent and complex role at the intersection of American consumption practices and the Christian moral critique of capitalism. Some volunteers bemoaned the "waste" of biomedicine in the United States, linking the waste to increased costs for health care. But they largely kept separate the discussion of

[73] This is perhaps most evident in the organization's motto "Helping the Hands That Heal," which I address more fully in Chapter 6.

biomedical waste and increased health care costs from the organizations' own role in benefiting from such waste, which I discuss in detail below. Additionally, most volunteers did not tend to directly associate or contrast their own consumption practices with institutionalized forms of biomedical "waste," which appeared largely as an area of separate concern in their conversations.[74]

At the same time, they did indicate that the redistribution of biomedical surplus was a moral obligation of American volunteers. Dagmar, a regular IHM volunteer, once phrased this obligation to give as something that came along inseparably with being "blessed" by abundance and good health. In my experience, people selectively used particular explanatory frameworks over others. For example, the history of colonialism was evoked occasionally to explain the disparity in medical supplies that existed in the United States and in Madagascar, while the language of blessing was employed in order to highlight the personal responsibility and obligation of American volunteers to give and redistribute these supplies.

In both organizations, the volunteers' ability to give their labor as a gift – and their spoken acknowledgement of its gift status – is but one sign of their relative financial security. Yet while they may be characterized as securely middle-class, the level of the volunteers' financial security varied widely in both organizations due partly to the

[74] This could be because those volunteers with strong opinions on the subject, particularly former and retired missionaries, may have worried that they would alienate their coworkers by criticizing middle-class American consumption practices in their presence. I noticed that former and retired missionaries, for example, were more likely to voice concerns about American "overabundance" in personal interviews with me rather than in the context of discussions among fellow volunteers at the two medical aid organizations. By using the theological term "overabundance," missionaries signaled the fact that they, on the whole, have greater access to Lutheran theological discussions, through their own seminary training or that of their colleagues. In addition to the personal experiences of living overseas, it may have been the case that this difference also reflected the varying levels of religious education that distinguished missionaries from their fellow volunteers.

assortment of occupations they pursued and their family obligations. As an elderly population, regular IHM volunteers lived primarily on their pensions. None of the IHM volunteers I knew held part-time jobs for pay outside the warehouse, though many worked as volunteers for other organizations and for their churches. Besides a number of retired foreign missionaries, the IHM volunteers included a retired postal delivery driver, mortician and funeral home director, electrical inspector, mail carrier, dentist, several homemakers, an engineer, registered nurse, factory laborer, and anesthesiology nurse and public health educator.

At Malagasy Partnership, in contrast, most volunteers were not retired but were working families with hectic schedules involving the weekly meetings of church-related small groups and extracurricular activities. The children attended college and held part-time jobs or had recently graduated from college, while their parents worked full-time as a registered nurse (Julie), information technology director for a Minneapolis hospital (Lynn), Internet programmer and Web analyst (Joel), and engineer for a large medical supply manufacturer (Matt). One retired couple from Lynn's church volunteered exclusively during the daytime one day each week, in order to receive shipments at the Malagasy Partnership warehouse while Lynn was at work.

In the section that follows, I look specifically at how IHM and Malagasy Partnership volunteers define their ethical practice with overseas Lutheran churches by reshaping the medical materials into "useful" things and by differentiating between the kinds of waste that exist and human wastefulness. After the removal of medical items from the biomedical institution, the faith-based non-profits endeavor to claim them as something qualitatively different from institutional discards. Yet, as I suggest, the

medical materials remain value-generating forms for the biomedical institution. Besides carrying signs of the institution that cannot be easily erased, their status as charitable donations promotes the business of biomedicine.

Placing Value in Medical Supplies

A short article on the warehouse expansion of International Health Mission (IHM) hit the monthly Lutheran newspaper in Minneapolis/St. Paul during the summer of 2005. The paper's publication prompted one conversation among the operations manager Mark, the volunteer coordinator Dagmar, a fellow volunteer Lois, and myself, who all sat together sipping coffee one Tuesday morning during the regularly scheduled break. In-between bites of a glazed donut, Mark told us circumspectly that he had not been happy with the article. Mark is an affable and energetic paid staff member of IHM, a lifelong ELCA Lutheran who, as he told me, was partly of Swedish descent. When I first met Mark, with short light blond hair and a boyish face, he looked to be in his early 20s but I later discovered that he was 38 years old and married with a young daughter. After completing his bachelor's in history and a master's degree, he applied for the IHM position in 1998 and told me that over time he came to see the work there as an inspiring vocation, in the sense of being a spiritual calling.

During our conversation that Tuesday morning, Mark indicated that he had been bothered by the article author's frequent use of the term "recycle" to characterize what IHM does with medical supplies. In addition, the author had quoted a statement of the IHM executive director, who noted:

> IHM stands in the garbage stream, so to speak. We recycle medical material that's discarded. Everything we send to developing nations is perfectly useable, but would have otherwise ended up in landfills.

For Mark, the word “recycle” and the implication that the medical supplies were waste destined for a landfill signified an ideology of aid work that he attempted to overturn through his work at IHM.

Mark told us that he was concerned that the word “recycle” could advance for some readers the presupposition that hospitals served by IHM would be, or should be, content receiving the waste of Americans. This concern was not only held by Mark. Dagmar had commented before upon the way Minnesotan hospital workers labeled the donation boxes that were later received at IHM. The cardboard surfaces sometimes revealed a series of terms scrawled consecutively in marker, such as “can’t use” and “third world” or “out of date” and “mission.” From Dagmar’s point of view, these inscribed terms indicated that their writers were making the problematic presumption that people in the “third world” should be using what “can’t be used” or is “out of date” by biomedical standards in the United States.

Dagmar, a tall woman with deep-set eyes and the slight hint of her native Danish language in spoken English, was a missionary nurse for the Danish Lutheran church in Nigeria, where she met her American missionary husband. Before her retirement, Dagmar also spent a longer period working as an anesthesiology nurse and public health educator in Minnesota, where the couple has lived for over twenty years. She frequently advised fellow volunteers on the medical supplies’ usefulness in foreign clinics, due to her previous overseas experience. Mark, on the other hand, often became the organization’s representative in communications over e-mail, with church volunteer groups, the regular volunteer workforce, and donors. In the context of our newspaper article discussion, Mark pointed out that handling used material was only a small portion

of the work that IHM does. “Many of the items, if not most of them, that we send are *new* [donated supplies],” he emphasized. “We also buy a number of things to send based on what people need and request.” Mark placed the task of “meeting the needs” of partner hospitals and clinics above that of recycling used materials, which he regarded as a secondary, positive effect of IHM’s operation.

The notion of recycling highlights the continuity between the former life of things and their future instantiations. To “recycle” a medical supply suggests that something fundamentally carries over from the previous form, only that it is reshaped or repurposed. In our conversation, the act of recycling appeared to suggest that the supplies retained some of their original form as hospital discards when they were sent overseas by IHM. Mark wished to erase this connection to the thing’s former life. He was not only concerned that the medical supplies would appropriately serve the organization’s overseas partners, but also that the organization would be a collective sign of these ethical relations to the reading public of the Lutheran newspaper. At the time of our discussion, Dagmar listened while Mark explained his position, one that he qualified by noting that it was “how he personally saw things.” When Mark had been called away and Lois returned to work, Dagmar picked up the subject of the article again with me. She said she thought the piece was “fine,” that “recycling is a part of what we do here.”[75] Dagmar looked at the act of recycling as part of an overall process of reconstituting the medical supplies, a necessary step in order to respond to the requests of “partner clinics.” She did not necessarily view the act of recycling as a property that inhered *in* the medical

[75] Dagmar may have been expressing a different discourse at the warehouse, one which I heard less often than Mark’s insistence on the medical supplies being non-junk. One sign, which was posted by a former volunteer that I did not know personally and later taken down in the warehouse renovation, called the work at IHM the “highest form of recycling.”

materials as Mark had done (recycled things) but as an embodied labor of the volunteers (recycling) that confirmed the Christian virtues of use and thrift.

Exchange-Value, Medical Supply Donation, and the Business of Biomedicine

Before delving more fully into how these perspectives coexist, we might first explore one of Mark's initial contentions with the article, the characterization of the medical supplies IHM acquires as the waste of American biomedicine. Underlying Mark's unease is the way that several "regimes" of value production coexist and collide in the space of the non-profits (Verdery and Humphrey 2004). The faith-based agencies seek to redirect the market movement of the medical materials and concurrently to imbue them with sacred value. At the same time, IHM, Malagasy Partnership, and relief organizations like them do depend on the existence of the legal-economic category of hospital waste that makes their operation possible.[76] The process of disposal to which the article author and IHM executive director referred ostensibly transforms medical items into valueless "waste" of the medical establishment. But this process is, in fact, a multifaceted practice for the biomedical institution that both devalues supplies as active property of the medical center and re-values the materials as charitable donations.

Disposal comprises a property transfer that is critical for the biomedical industry in placing certain supplies or equipment outside the realm of medical interaction, alienating and making less visible materials no longer considered desirable for medical practice. As Hetherington (2004) argues, disposal is an oft-neglected facet of consumption that reveals as much about how people and institutions relate to "things" in

[76] By the term "hospital waste," I do not mean "medical waste," which usually refers to "biohazardous" materials contaminated with bodily fluids and used "sharps" like scalpels and needles. Hospitals dispose of these items separately.

their surroundings as the process of acquisition. For biomedical institutions, appropriate disposal is an adherence to the germ theory of disease and hygienic measures for the prevention and isolation of infection, as well as a legal obligation. The faith-based medical non-profits may be viewed as one "conduit of disposal" for the hospital in that the supplies are placed there and removed from the medical institution in the process (Hetherington 2004:165).

The donation of medical materials is not exclusively a charitable act on the part of U.S. hospitals but also a compliance with federal law and insurance regulations that reduce hospitals' liability to patients (Rosenblatt and Silverman 1992:1441). Materials are donated to Malagasy Partnership and IHM from hospitals and clinics in Minneapolis/St. Paul and the surrounding region for one or more of five central reasons. The items may be "short-dated" and close to reaching their manufacturer expiration dates with about three or four months of existent "shelf life." Furthermore, a new product vendor may have been chosen for a piece of equipment, making the former one outdated or superfluous (even if completely new). Additionally, a surplus could exist of a particular medical item due to changing medical procedures at the hospital and the materials required for their implementation. If more than the requisite number of supplies has been opened for a given procedure, an operating room situation that Rosenblatt et al. (1997:478) call "over-preparedness," they generally may not be assigned to another procedure at a hospital even if they have not been used. Finally, some items may remain unopened and unused but are no longer considered sterile as judged by the manufacturer's expiration date on the packaging. In our conversation, Mark had pointed out the crucial difference between recovered supplies and reused supplies, making the

argument that many IHM supplies were in fact never previously used in the biomedical institution (see also Rosenblatt and Silverman 1992:1443). Many of these medical supplies can *only* be sent overseas because they cannot be used in American hospitals due to insurance regulations.

In particular, the presence of expired medical supplies or those close to reaching their expiration dates increases the "risk" of legal liability for the medical center and for individual health care workers (Rosenblatt and Silverman 1992:1441). In receiving a donation, the faith-based non-profits assume this liability on behalf of the hospital. On the rare occasions when they accept expired medical supplies, these agencies do so with the understanding that the specific type of medical supply may be resterilized at the receiving hospital, eliminating most surface microorganisms using the prevailing equipment of heat sterilization, the autoclave machine. Sterility is not required of all medical supplies and corresponds to sterile and non-sterile zones of the medicalized body (e.g., blood versus skin, respectively) that determine the appropriate preparation of medical items for a given procedure. Materials may be deemed "unsuitable" for U.S. biomedical institutions as a result more of the "legal and political climate" that surrounds biomedicine than because of their complete inability to be used for "safe, effective patient care," as two medical professionals noted in their discussion of the recovery program for unused surgical supplies at Yale-New Haven Hospital in Connecticut (Rosenblatt and Silverman 1992:1442).[77]

[77] Rosenblatt et al. (1996:631) report that the non-profit Yale-New Haven program, entitled REMEDY, accrued operating room supplies valued at $500,000 between the inception of the recovery program in June of 1991 and the date of the journal article (1996). Indeed, it is the high exchange-value of the recovered medical supplies that has some non-profit workers worried. At the April 2006 Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare (TECH) meeting, several people expressed concerns that a multi-national corporation may become more involved in organizing a used medical supply market and siphon off the charitable donations they receive into a lucrative for-profit trade. This would make medical supplies less available to

Multiple transfers of value underpin the movement of supplies between the medical institution and the non-profit and perhaps over-determine the transition as a shift in their value.[78] From a legal and business standpoint, the revaluation of donated items according to their "full market price" is a central part of the transaction, for it offers hospitals a monetary figure which may be repurposed as a tax deduction.[79] Non-profit organizations are legally prohibited in the United States from valuing their donors' gifts-in-kind, although they must do so for their own financial records. The transfer of ownership, signaled by copious paper documentation, gives the hospital the legal ability to revalue items monetarily that were otherwise designated as "waste."[80]

Although conceived legally as "non-profits," then, organizations like IHM and Malagasy Partnership play an integral role in property transfers that ultimately reconstitute the materials' exchange-value. In other words, they enable the profitable exchange of different forms of capital (i.e. commodities and credits). The implicit

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the hospitals served by organizations like IHM and Malagasy Partnership and require them to purchase more supplies from an international market. One could observe, then, that there is a separate incentive for non-profits in only calculating the monetary value of the medical donations for the purposes of their financial records, as required by law, but in not doing so for any other reasons. Some of the TECH members pointed out to me that it is also fiscally beneficial for the hospitals to continue making charitable donations rather than selling their supplies on a used medical supply market. They are able to value these supplies and/or equipment at their "full market price" when they claim them as charitable donations, whereas the hospitals would likely *not* be able to acquire the full market price if they were to sell them to a multi-national supply distributor. In this calculation, the tax credit is worth more than the direct sale, a transaction I describe more fully in the body of the chapter.

[78] I am grateful to Josh Reno for suggesting this point.

[79] There are other reasons why donation is fiscally appealing to hospitals. Donations are often made on the hospitals' terms, meaning that non-profit organizations must be willing to accept whatever a hospital is willing to give. Non-profits must provide the volunteer labor to sort through donations in order to determine what items may be useful and, sometimes, even what items are contained in donated boxes, bags, and bins. In this way, hospitals reduce labor costs involved with the disposal of supplies. Additionally, hospitals decrease the cost of disposal itself. If non-profit organizations subsequently find certain supplies unusable, they must assume financial responsibility for their disposal.

[80] Donated manufactured medical supplies comprise part of the support received by U.S.-based private voluntary organizations that exceeded $18 billion during the 2005 fiscal year alone (USAID 2007:5). USAID unfortunately does not offer specific statistics on exactly how much of this total comes from biomedical donations, and I have been unable to track down a specific figure elsewhere. The USAID figure includes support of in-kind and private contributions from U.S. citizens and private sources, but not that from governmental agencies like USAID.

principle underpinning such transfers is the fact that for medical supplies to be considered valuable by both parties (i.e., the non-profit and the for-profit) they simultaneously must be without a use-value for the hospital but still possessing an exchange-value.

Additionally, the donated medical supplies take on new economic value upon their receipt by the Malagasy Lutheran health care department (SALFA) in Antananarivo. SALFA is a centralized health care department with nine hospitals and 39 dispensaries under its authority that stretch across the island. As a health care network providing administrative assistance to each medical center, SALFA accrues a portion of the funds for its operation through charging a small service fee for the medical supplies it disburses to each clinic. In effect, medical materials donated or recovered from hospitals and ostensibly removed from the biomedical supply trade in the U.S. (i.e., valued as "gifts-in-kind" for taxation but not priced for direct sale) construct a small subsidiary market in Madagascar for SALFA. With devaluation of the Malagasy *ariary*, SALFA cannot always purchase medical items directly from multinational biomedical suppliers. The donated medical supplies from the U.S. carry the potential of economic value for SALFA. Such redistributed goods channel recent biomedical tools into the country while enabling SALFA to create a market that propels its operation.[81]

Interestingly, many donors in Minnesota are unaware that the medical supplies become re-valued monetarily once they arrive in Madagascar. In addition, the value in *ariary* placed upon each item is not referred to by SALFA as the selling price but rather as the service fee. Each medical center within the SALFA network pays this service fee when it requests a medical supply and the collected money serves to finance the

[81] One criticism I have heard voiced about the centralized system is that smaller clinics or those existing in areas with a predominantly "cash-poor" population will not be able to absorb across-the-board fees instituted for medical supplies by SALFA, creating a disparity in clinics' access to medical materials.

centralized operation. The term “service fee” indexes the direct utility of the money yielded in funding SALFA’s administration and endeavors to avoid the possible misinterpretation that the organization may be financially profiting in any way from the donations. The terminological distinction is important in maintaining the relationship between SALFA and its donor agencies. It hints at the complicated relationship that exists between SALFA and foreign donors and at the ways that SALFA is beholden to these organizations through an array of bureaucratic measures, such as accounting logs and annual reports.

Making Medical Supplies into Useful Things

At the IHM headquarters in suburban Minneapolis, Mark and Dagmar were not alone in responding strongly to the implication that the items they handled were “junk.” A frequent theme in comments critical of Lutheran charitable giving was the construction of a well-wishing, yet ignorant, churchgoing public against which IHM volunteers defined themselves. When former missionaries working at IHM occasionally bemoaned the lack of knowledge among Midwestern churchgoers of the “real needs” of their overseas “mission fields,” and the aid efforts that resulted, they delicately placed the assertion of congregants’ misdeeds and misinformation in the past. They thereby avoided conflating their current non-missionary coworkers and the churchgoing public they criticized.

One spring afternoon I stood counting intravenous catheters on a long table inside the sorting room with Harriet, a faithful weekly volunteer for 17 years and retired ELCA missionary nurse to Ngaoundéré, Cameroon for 36 years, and Lois, a former ELCA

missionary to southeast Madagascar for 30 years. I had repeated to the two an account I heard from a Christian aid worker that conveyed one perceived extreme of churchly frugality. Christian foreign missionaries of the mid-twentieth century had reportedly received once-used tea bags from American congregants, who saved these after each use and then donated them.

> Harriet laughed and said she could relate to the story, even though she had never heard of people sending tea bags to any place where she worked. Lois commented that she had seen this perspective in action: she remembered Madagascar missionaries receiving single shoelaces from people in the Midwest while she and her husband lived there, besides boxes of "stuff" that looked as though someone had simply turned a "junk drawer in their kitchen" upside down into a cardboard parcel. To her, these acts signaled a wider perception that missionaries were poor, self-sacrificing, and could make use of "everything." (Fieldnotes, May 2, 2006)

Taking on the position of aid recipient in conversation with myself and Harriet, Lois implied a unique understanding of how Lutheran aid items may be perceived by those to which they are sent, while also denoting visual qualities of such shipments as a sign of their incidental origin. Lois suggested that foreign missionaries became the intended recipients of household "junk" from American Lutheran congregants, reluctant to throw away their own items because of the personal stigma attached to wasteful behavior. Missionaries in this view became social figures who could turn potential waste or junk into something useful, saving items from becoming waste, allowing people to make a charitable gift rather than create waste per se, and thus removing from sight the negative moral consequence waste carried for the person.

Lois conscientiously made her work at IHM different from the haphazard overturning of a kitchen drawer into a cardboard box. To Lois, the overturned kitchen junk drawer signified a kind of giving that did not take into account the specific, localized

needs of missionaries and the people with whom they had worked. On several occasions she refused to package disposable supplies. A Baptist missionary couple stopped at IHM in October 2005 to pick up two duffle bags' worth of supplies for an orphanage they run in the Philippines. Gesturing toward a box of facial tissues as we located items for the orphanage, Lois remarked: "I don't like to send anything out that's just gonna be thrown away." A substantial number of items in the warehouse are made for one-time use, although they may be used beyond that in a clinic short on supplies.

The design of materials by medical supply manufacturers, though, is increasingly geared toward disposability (see related points on reuse in Rosenblatt and Silverman 1992:1443). It was important to Lois that anything coming from International Health Mission could be used more than once and *useful* in the long term, not something that could turn to waste shortly after it arrived and be placed back in the social category (waste/trash) from which IHM attempted to "recover" it. Lois questioned giving things simply to reduce one's own waste and its moral morass, symbolized by the household junk drawer, but also wanted giving to extend the life and usefulness of an object, thereby limiting or delaying the waste of others. This stance partly communicated the notion that American Lutherans should take responsibility for the disposal of non-useful things, and the quality of their actions more generally, rather than removing or passing on their culpability to others. Moreover, Lois conveyed an overarching value in fostering the durability, and long-term commitment, of the transnational ties that she and others created through the exchange of medical materials.

Mark often expressed the idea that the ultimate quantity of a supply was not necessarily the best indicator of the magnitude of its blessing for those who received it.

Rather, the supply's use-value for the clinic determined whether it *could* be a blessing. For Lutheran aid workers, the discourse of use engages in the production of ethical relations for the volunteers and is not simply part of a utilitarian calculus. The evocation of "waste" or "wastefulness" concurrently communicates the absence of these moral and ethical qualities in social relations.[82] Frow (2003:26) calls "waste" an important "symbolic distinction" that is often contrasted with use but actually underpins it. Aid workers in both agencies tended to label behavior wasteful when it concerned throwing things away due to obsolescence, excess, sheer convenience, or the "veneration of newness" (Strasser 1999:5). Some directly linked the waste of things to the improper stewardship of relations, as in the notion of the "throwaway society" (Strasser 1999:13), a term that I heard on several occasions. These terms impart a concern with use-relations as a moral practice.

Furthermore, the medical supplies were not understood plainly or with fixity as those that could be used and those that could not, but rather all supplies existed in a state of flux as they moved through the warehouses. Hetherington (2004: 159) notes, "Disposal is a continual practice of engaging with making and holding things in a state of abeyance." Due in part to the "highly heterogenous" composition of medical donations (Rosenblatt et al. 1996:630), volunteer workers, myself included, were engaged in a constant process of questioning, seeking advice, making uncertain and temporary classifications, and reorganizing the supplies. (See Figure 5.2) The process of sorting, to

[82] In Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*, nonutilitarian expenditure in "conspicuous consumption" is met by Veblen with moral "condemnation" precisely because it does not take into account the use-value of things (Frow 2003:31). Veblen's account criticized the ostentatious purchases of the aristocratic class that was forming in the late nineteenth-century United States. He interestingly brought to his scholarship the moral discourse of his Norwegian-American Lutheran upbringing in Cato, Wisconsin and rural Minnesota with Norwegian immigrant parents from the region of Valdres. Though he was not a practicing Lutheran as an adult, this element of his work has often been overlooked.

which an entire room was devoted at IHM, best captures the transitional and provisional dimensions of all the things that travel through the warehouse. Without explicit instruction, we were socialized into a policy of consulting with the former and retired medical professionals among the IHM volunteers, particularly Dagmar, to identify things and to make a series of final decisions about their appropriateness and condition.

Figure 5.2. Harriet sorting supplies in the new IHM sorting room after the 2005 building expansion

Both IHM and Malagasy Partnership engage in what Heatherington (2004) calls the performative and dynamic process of disposal. The act of sorting compartmentalizes the supplies into predetermined biomedical categories. At IHM, for example, more than twenty labeled plastic bins, such as "respiratory" and "anesthesiology," existed in the sorting room.[83] At Malagasy Partnership, volunteers always consulted Lynn firsthand when sorting materials and he gave them specific verbal instructions for the item's

[83] Harriet once half-jokingly called the process of placing the supplies into the bins as one of situating them in their "pews," highlighting the striking person-like qualities of the supplies and their role *in* the church.

placement, telling them that a surgical dressing, for instance, should be set in the marker-labeled “sterile dressings” bin rather than classified as “surgical supplies.” Still, some piles of stuff existed that no one knew what to do with, and these supplies sat in abeyance on the edges of countertops, in bags, or on utility tables (Hetherington 2004:166).

Even as some volunteers threw things away at IHM in order to avoid sending “junk” overseas, others quickly retrieved items from the trash bin to bring them home. Maude, a monthly volunteer appearing to be in her 70s with short, straight white hair, joined Harriet and me in the supply sorting room one September afternoon. Maude observed a thin, clear plastic rectangular container with an attached cover that had been placed in the trash bag in the sorting room. “It’s a shame to throw this away,” she said as she gingerly picked the plastic tub out of the trash. Harriet nodded, observing the container as Maude rotated it in her hand. Maude said she could use the container “for small things” she had at home and placed it beside her bag on the floor. Many of the volunteers at International Health Mission share Maude’s concern with the moral implications of “waste” and “wastefulness,” something which both draws them to IHM’s work but also is constructed in the very experience of “salvaging” and packing used and donated medical supplies (cf. Reno 2008).

For Maude, it wasn’t simply important that the container could be ably *used* for something, but also that it was a “shame” to throw it away because of that fact. As Mark’s earlier discussion and Maude’s salvaging of the plastic tub reveal, the medical supplies may be considered more than one kind of thing at once and the trace effects of their former lives in the hospital system may be disputed, managed, and erased by IHM workers. Concurrently, volunteer workers participate in a process of transforming the

medical materials into specially valued things, which in turn specifies the kind of activity in which they are engaged, gives their labor moral value, and asserts that gifted items for overseas hospitals are explicitly not "junk."

Sinfulness and "Junk" Medical Supplies

One subtle refinement to the avoidance of "waste" at IHM is a statement scrawled in marker at the bottom of a white board in the warehouse: "Junk for Jesus is still junk." This admonition reminds the volunteers sorting medical supplies that the quality of donations is more important than simply sending things abroad. The language of the sign is interesting: sending "junk" items, even with the aim that they be used to do the healing work of Jesus, doesn't obviate the fact that these items are "still junk." The healing work of Jesus doesn't require just any things but quality things that are needed and useful. Moreover, the scrawled reminder on the white board suggests that it is necessary in their work at IHM for volunteers to *create* waste themselves, throwing things away that are not useful for practitioners or patients.

Therefore, even as Mark and others suggested that the medical materials were fully reconstituted upon entry into the IHM warehouse, this sign and other perspectives simultaneously implied that some supplies did have nonmalleable qualities. In contrast to other items initially seen as hospital waste, the "junk" quality of some items arriving at the IHM warehouse could not be transformed, nor should it be ignored. The sign, which I discuss in more detail below, challenges the notion that all donations would be appropriate aid. The sign's language implicitly communicates the idea that an item's ultimate worth lies in its use-value for Lutheran practitioners working overseas.

Shortly after beginning my research, I discovered that the warehouse sign at IHM ("Junk for Jesus is still junk") derived its language from the policies and rhetoric adopted by Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare. Malagasy Partnership and International Health Mission constitute part of a movement of more than 100 U.S.-based Christian health care organizations, which has been known collectively since 1990 as Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare or TECH. TECH agencies distinguish themselves from their predecessors and their contemporaries in two primary ways. First, TECH requires organizations to meet specific standards for the quality of their donations and the frequency of their communication with aid recipients before they may join the collectivity, aspects of the operations that are assessed through site visits to the organizations' headquarters. (See the quality standards in Appendix II)

Secondly, TECH's elected leadership openly criticizes non-member Christian agencies that send what they call "junk" overseas. They comment upon the way these agencies' behavior tarnishes the reputation of all Christians to non-Christians. Moreover, they identify "junk" medical supplies as the detritus of morally dubious behavior and, ultimately, inherent human sinfulness. This sinfulness stems from an insufficient effort to match medical supplies with the expressed "needs" of people elsewhere. The careful accumulation of supplies that match people's needs forms a three-way process of communication and obedience with the divine in prayer, the aid recipients, and American aid workers.

The Faith-Based Initiative, TECH, and Church-State Relations

International Health Mission was one of the first five organizations to join TECH in 1990, along with the North Carolina agency Samaritan's Purse, which is run by Billy Graham's son Franklin, and the Michigan-based organization that is now known as International Aid. IHM supporters assisted TECH in becoming a registered non-profit organization, since they completed and filed the paperwork in the state of Minnesota. Mark told me that he has observed since 1990 an "evolution" in a number of organizations that began largely as supply procurement agencies like IHM. Many have become more specialized over the years, focusing on the procurement and refurbishment of one medical item. The leaders of these organizations have "felt called to focus on a few items and *do it well,*" Mark emphasized. He listed several that came to mind: Hope Haven acquires wheelchairs and mobility support, Chosen obtains surgical tables and sterilizers, Worldwide Lab collects laboratory supplies, Patterson Dental specializes in dental equipment, and Gleaning for the World simply "gleans" medical supplies for other agencies but does not ship materials abroad itself. The specialization of some organizations ultimately benefits the whole: TECH members participate in online discussion boards where they post requests for particular medical items or equipment. If the other members possess a needed item, they typically supply it to the requesting agency for free or with a small processing fee, with the requester picking up the cost of shipping. The TECH affiliation produces a criss-crossing web of medical supply exchanges that stretch across the United States.[84]

[84] Indeed, just weeks before the April 2006 TECH meeting, Malagasy Partnership benefited from multiple shipments of "4X4s", or 4-inch by 4-inch square gauze, from TECH members. When his Malagasy liaison requested gauze, Lynn posted a notice that he was seeking the supply on the TECH Web site and received many offers, and then shipments, of gauze in response. Lynn instructed me to thank the TECH members at

President George W. Bush's Faith-Based Initiative, which began in 2001, opened a new category of federal funding for international aid and currently sponsors some of the overseas work done by TECH organizations. The second Bush presidency institutionalized the Faith-Based Initiative in the Department of Health and Human Services. But the Clinton administration actually took the first step toward changing the restrictions on federal funding for faith-based organizations, since it supported legislation that introduced in 1996 the notion of "charitable choice" in welfare provision. Charitable choice legislation enabled states to choose social service providers from among faith-based organizations but did not furnish a new source of federal funding for their work (HHS – CFBCI 2008).

The more recent expansion of federal funding has been directed to domestic social services as well as international aid provision. In December 2002, President Bush created the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). If they opt to do so, CFBCI is the agency to which TECH members like IHM and Malagasy Partnership, which send relief aid outside the United States, may appeal for federal funding. During the fiscal year 2004-2005, USAID reimbursed $36,000 of IHM's shipping costs for 10 overseas container shipments. Non-profits are eligible for up to $50,000 in ocean freight reimbursement. In order to acquire funding for the fiscal year 2006-2007, the operations manager Mark completed a grant application for USAID that projected the shipping schedule for the next two years, duties and customs' fees for each port where IHM ships,

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the April conference for their generosity in supplying these items. I was also told by Lynn to ask the TECH members for a series of items that Malagasy Partnership still needed at the time for its next shipment: multivitamins for adults and for children, sutures, dental needles, sterile and exam gloves, ultrasounds, pulse oximeters, fetal dopplers, and blood transfusion bags.

and whether IHM qualifies for duty-free status in any of those places. In contrast to IHM, Malagasy Partnership decided not to apply for CFBCI funding while I was working with the organization in 2005-2006. Lynn told me that this was primarily because of the time involved in completing the paperwork and following-up with USAID. As an organization run completely by volunteers, he did not foresee having the time among the volunteers to devote to writing the USAID grant application. He said that a second, less influential, reason for not applying was the impression he got from other TECH agencies that the funding might be difficult to obtain for small organizations "without conections in Washington."

Since its inception, the Faith-Based Initiative has garnered much criticism due to a variety of issues, from questions over its constitutionality to its overwhelming support for Christian organizations rather than those of other faiths and its lack of oversight for the agencies it funds (Henriques and Lehren 2006).[85] Underlying the Initiative is an argument that faith-based organizations have been discriminated against by the U.S.

[85] Recent cases have directly challenged the constitutionality of the Faith-Based Initiative through lawsuits against religious agencies that received federal funds. The most influential decision as of late has been the ruling on December 3, 2007 by a U.S. Court of Appeals against the InnerChange Freedom Initiative, an evangelical Christian program that prepared Iowa prisoners for re-entering life outside prison through a bible-based curriculum (Banerjee 2007). The Freedom Initiative had been working with 104 prisoners in a Newton, Iowa facility, in conjunction with Prison Fellowship Ministries and the Iowa Department of Corrections. Responding to a lawsuit filed by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Appeals court decision noted that InnerChange, a recipient of federal funds, violates the separation of church and state because "the indoctrination and definition criteria had the effect of advancing or endorsing religion" (cited in Banerjee 2007:A22). In its decision, the Appeals court upheld the ruling of a lower court in June 2006, but challenged the earlier requirement that the InnerChange program pay back the $1.5 million in state aid that it has received. The latest ruling, in combination with others, suggest the legal tide may be turning to prohibit government funds from being used for religious activities.

Though much criticism has been directed toward the recipients of faith-based grants, suggesting that they collapse the separation of church and state, the grant recipients also have problems with the expectations underlying the Faith-Based Initiative. For instance, some members of Lutheran congregations in the Twin Cities that receive small grants through the Faith-Based Initiative told me they feel as though their church is being asked to become a complex and incompatible hybrid of social service agency and religious institution, filling in services that the U.S. government has failed to provide its citizens. Additionally, in their view, they are being asked to transform the actual space of their churches so as not to be seen as prosyletizing unlawfully to those to whom they provide social services, such as ESL classes.

government until this point, because they were ineligible for federal grants. Eligibility for state funding was restricted from organizations that were "pervasively sectarian," a term that prior court decisions used to enforce the establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution (Sullivan 2002:370).[86] Though the Faith-Based Initiative claims to address discrimination toward all faith-based organizations, scholars suggest that the earlier court decisions enforcing the establishment clause, and the development of "church-state doctrine," for years reflected an anti-Catholic bias and implicit favor to Protestant organizations (370).[87] The anti-Catholic bias, however, began to be read by some in recent years as a bias toward "religion in general" that had been present in the court rulings on disestablishment and federal funding (371). This rhetorical sleight-of-hand linked the funding restrictions with other discourses among evangelicals that concerned discrimination against religion. Thus, the Faith-Based Initiative built upon a circulating argument that the First Amendment clauses concerning religion must be seen as a "protection for, not against, religion" (Sullivan 2002:371).

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the First Amendment jurisprudence has taken a predominant stance of government "neutrality" toward religion, an aim to "neither promote religion nor to inhibit it," which is a markedly different position from

[86] The Everson v. Board of Education (1947) case questioned whether it was constitutional for the state of New Jersey to reimburse parents for the cost of busing their children to a private institution. The majority opinion of the Supreme Court, written by Justice Hugo Black, indicated that the separation of church and state was upheld, yet Black simultaneously argued that the case at hand was not an issue of separation necessarily. Parents had only tried to get their children to school as best as they could, whether this was to a religious school or a non-religious school. Sullivan (2002:376) points out, "While enshrining separation, Black was also insisting on equality between religion and non-religion."

[87] Upon close inspection, we can see that significant limits and exceptions to disestablishment have obtained throughout U.S. history, rather than only being new features of the Faith-Based Initiative: the U.S. government explicitly funded Christian mission work to curtail Native American religious practices during Grant's presidency and has limited religious expression through other less explicit policies and initiatives in different time periods (see Wildenthal and O'Neil 2000:330). Thus, deeply embedded notions of "religious freedom" in U.S. history might best be considered from multiple perspectives and as narrative devices of certain national histories.

that of active separation of church and state (372). Sullivan (2002) suggests this jurisprudence and the emphasis on equality and neutrality was a secondary effect of the effort to "achieve racial equality in law" (374). In their arguments for separation, early writings on establishment employed evangelical language to suggest that religion was fundamentally different than the state, as the garden was from the wilderness (374). More recent cases, such as Mitchell v. Helms (2000), have asserted the position that religion is *not* notably different from or is the same as the state in order to argue for its equal treatment with regard to federal funds (378).[88] These cases and the Faith-Based Initiative use the discourse of the Civil Rights Movement in that they contain a "demand for equality" that associates the enforcement of the separation of church and state with inequality and segregation (Sullivan 2002:389). The modeling of socially-engaged evangelical Christianity upon the Civil Rights Movement is not only limited to church-state jurisprudence, as Harding (2000:23) reports, but informed the rhetoric of preachers like Jerry Falwell who urged his followers "to stand up for their freedom" and oppose religious "segregation" and "discrimination."

At a general level, the Faith-Based Initiative and the recent legal challenges to it suggest the funding policy contains ambiguity concerning what is and is not a religious activity (Banerjee 2007). In particular, the USAID grants of the Center for Faith-Based

[88] In this case, Mitchell v. Helms (2000), the problem at issue was whether the state should fund educational materials, such as computers, for religious schools in Louisiana. The majority opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, following certain aspects of Everson v. Board of Education, that the law benefited children, not religion, but it criticized the strict separation of church and state that the Everson ruling promoted (Sullivan 2002:377). In fact, the majority opinion, written by Justice Clarence Thomas, argued scathingly that the Court had "reserve[d] special hostility for those who take their religion seriously, who think that their religion should affect the whole of their lives, or who make the mistake of being effective in transmitting their views to their children" (cited in Sullivan 2002:378). It asserted that the federal aid to religious schools in Louisiana was not unconstitutional. In making this argument, it relied upon one use of the term "neutrality" advanced within the Everson decision, as in the "evenhandedness of distribution between religious and secular beneficiaries," rather than the state's "universal neutrality" toward religion that Black ultimately argued for in Everson (379).

and Community Initiatives come with loosely configured stipulations that an organization must provide social services while keeping evangelical materials at a distance. The funding guidelines prohibit the use of government funds for "inherently religious activities."

> Grant funds may not be used for inherently religious activities such as worship, prayer, proselytizing, or devotional Bible study. The funds are to be used to further the objectives established by Congress such as economic development, food aid, fighting disease, disaster relief, as well as other USAID stated programs and goals.
>
> A faith-based organization should take steps to ensure that its inherently religious activities, such as religious worship or instruction are separate - in time or location - from the government-funded services that it offers (FBCI – Frequently Asked Questions 2008).

The divide, however, between the provision of social services and "inherently religious activities" is very gray in practice. Though explicit evangelism is prohibited by the funding under the Faith-Based Initiative, TECH agencies exhibit a range of policies and approaches to the combination of relief work and evangelism. In fact, they make it apparent in their collective statement of faith and personal testimonies that their commitment to Christianity is an essential and undeniable part of everything that they do. As I describe below, TECH leaders make the argument that the personal relationship with Jesus pervades every act of relief work, but the government regulations on federal funding suggest that religion only becomes inherent in overt "worship, prayer, prosyletizing, or devotional Bible study."

Besides an affirmation of their quality standards, TECH members must participate in a statement of faith that resembles a liturgical creed.[89] The umbrella organization thus

[89] The Statement of Faith is as follows: "*We believe* in one God, the Father,/The Almighty, maker of heaven and earth./*We believe* in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only/Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father./*We believe* in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from/the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the/Son is worshipped and glorified./*We believe* Jesus will come again in glory/to judge the living and the dead,/and His kingdom will have no end./*We believe* in the resurrection of the dead,/To eternal life in the

demonstrates certain qualities of denominationalism, yet does not take the place of the churches that TECH members attend individually. While some TECH organizations operate in conjunction with large American churches, others began as the independent efforts of people who took short-term mission trips and perceived shortages of supplies in overseas clinics, vowing to work to remedy the situation upon their return to the U.S. At the April 2006 meeting that I attended for Malagasy Partnership, one board member who sends medical equipment to Central America asked me about my research during a coffee break between sessions. I described it as best as I could, including a somewhat naïve comment about how I saw TECH as a "social movement." He disagreed with my characterization and told me that the notion of a social movement was "man's construct." Sensing perhaps that my language did not reflect a Christian witness, he continued on. "A personal relationship with Jesus – that's it," he said. "People here see heaven as more real than the fact that your hair is red and mine is white. It's truly more real to them. They would rather die than deny the existence of Christ here. It's *all* about Christ here." His powerful witness to me constructed the reality of heaven and the personal relationship with Christ as a presence in our interaction ("It's *all* about Christ here"), as well as the vital substance of the social relations that composed Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare. To talk of religion or social movements, therefore, would in his view be to secularize the pursuits of TECH members and ignore the "personal relationship with Jesus" that motivated each participant. In relation to the Faith-Based Initiative, the man's testimony suggested that an effort to pin down the religious dimension of the work of TECH agencies would, in his view, be a fruitless and estranging exercise.

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world to come" (TECH, Improving the Quality of Healthcare in the Developing World, Pamphlet, Italics in original).

Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare holds two conferences per year where members come together for worship and to share resources with one another. Conference participants often weave their involvement with TECH into a deeply spiritual testimony that becomes part of the conference format.[90] Although he was unable to attend every year, Mark described the TECH conference to me as a "spirit-rich environment" and a place for "fellowshipping." At the April 2006 meeting in Kingsport, Tennessee, each agency was invited to provide a five-minute update on its activities over the course of the previous year. The agency representatives who were present repeatedly portrayed God as an active force within their organizations and diminished their own agency in the procurement of medical technologies. "God gives you exactly what you need" one woman who was preparing a shipment for Honduras witnessed to the attendants. She expressed her desire to be a "vessel of honor" to God through her previous work as a missionary nurse in Egypt. "God has provided more work than ever," another man said in describing his Indianapolis organization. Still another woman explained that her lab equipment agency benefited in the last year when "God expanded the operation to pathology." Another man who directed an organization in the Washington, D.C. area told the seated audience, "TECH is the body of Christ for me." The TECH leaders reinforced this characterization by handing out circular stickers that the participants wore on their clothes throughout the three-day meeting: "No junk for

[90] Its faith-based approach to the provision of medical aid is what distinguishes TECH from its secular counterparts, which seem to also be increasing nationally. The medical centers of Duke University and Yale University recently committed to send their medical surplus overseas. Duke's medical surplus, organized through the university's Global Health Institute, will be sent to Uganda (Mangan 2007). The Yale effort is called Recovered Medical Equipment for the Developing World or REMEDY (see Rosenblatt and Silverman 1992; Rosenblatt et al. 1997, 1996).

Jesus." The stickers signaled the participants' commitment to the TECH quality standards, as well as the TECH affirmation of faith.

Identifying "Junk" Supplies at IHM and Malagasy Partnership

For volunteers at IHM and Malagasy Partnership, the refrain "No junk for Jesus" communicates how the volunteers perceive their selfhood and the shape of their actions. Richard, a retired engineer and regular IHM volunteer who repaired equipment and arranged pallets for shipment, once told Mark that storing junk in the warehouse was akin to "keeping sin in you and not freeing it up." Richard interpreted the storage of junk as something that "kept one from receiving blessing." In other words, the presence of junk was a detrimental force, not a series of stationary objects, but a social act in itself that erected an impenetrable wall between people in the space of the organization and God. The blessing a person might receive for acquiring and storing items to send overseas was blocked effectively by these supplies; they pervaded the environment around them, not just encircling the volunteer workers and the other stored materials, but penetrating their inner lives as well. Mark indicated to me that Richard's point of view reinforced the importance of sticking to the standards set forth by TECH. Junk in the warehouse not only adversely affected clinics and patients, if sent overseas, but in the more immediate surroundings the visual and physical presence of "junk" influenced volunteers' spiritual state of being. In some respects, Richard's independent interpretation of the presence of "junk" – constructed in our conversation by Mark as arising from Richard's own spiritual life – made the TECH standards appear more divinely ordained; reasons for adhering to them seemed to arise from separate sources.

In our conversation, Mark characterized the storage of junk in the warehouse as an act of "holding [sin] in the darkness of the warehouse." He was using a familiar perception of warehouse spaces to convey the possible pervasiveness of sin in a place – taking up and moving through space like the "darkness" in a warehouse, occupying the warehouse like sin trapped within the confines of the body. Warehouses may be characterized as vacuous and dark places, with an abundance *of* space; with these descriptors in mind, Mark gave myself as a listener the visual acuity to see the sort of perceptual space where sin was kept and stored, erecting a boundary to blessing. He made a correspondence to the body of the volunteers like Richard who could sense the sinfulness of the behavior that caused junk to be kept on the warehouse shelves.

Mark mused that, from Richard's point of view, the storage of junk could prevent others from donating materials and possibly from working there as volunteers – all invisible processes known to stem from the larger negative force of sinful behavior and the capacity of materials to be overcome by sin and become vessels of its range and effect. Junk could obstruct the formation of moral community that the useful supply exchanges otherwise built, severing ties with potential volunteers. Interestingly, in Richard's estimation, the medical supplies that remained at the warehouse, without a certain purpose or destination, were already junk because of their non-usefulness. To hold items in abeyance would be only to verify their junk quality, since their usefulness had not been readily identified. In some ways, it was the very ambiguity of their position in the circulation of medical supplies through the warehouse that had made them into junk.

It was not often that I heard such a direct connection of the sinfulness of "junk" medical supplies, the physicality of sin, and the volunteers' own spiritual welfare. Yet,

other volunteers endorsed the more general view that sending *non-useful* things abroad would definitely be sinful. At Malagasy Partnership, the volunteers did not as openly use a language of sin to communicate appropriate behavior for American medical aid providers. Lynn abided by the TECH standards but I never observed him evoking the notion of sin in his conversations with volunteers. This could be due to the fact that the volunteers were, on the whole, of a different generation, comprising a younger population that participated in many forms of mass-mediated religious expression, such as radio-broadcast Christian rock music, and used different language to describe their faith as a result. In Malagasy Partnership, rather than highlighting what would *not* be appropriate, Lynn and the other volunteers tended to talk directly with God during their 15-minute group prayer circle each week, a time when volunteers individually asked God "for what we should be doing." In their prayers, God came across as the intermediary who set standards for the medical aid organization. He was constructed as a kind friend and collaborator, even a buddy, rather than as a fear-inspiring or distant force.[91]

One way of specifying that the warehouse supplies were explicitly non-junk was to designate them as divinely "called" things. Lynn had stipulated on several occasions in prayer that the medical supplies packaged within the warehouse had been "called" by God and were not merely "sent," a pivotal distinction. On one snowy February evening in 2006, before the group prayer circle that concluded the evening's work session, Lynn narrated with detail the story of his interaction with a company that supplies the medical industry with Hemacue finger sticks, which are used to obtain blood samples for tests. Each small test kit (*cuvette*) costs about $1.25, Lynn explained, which makes it difficult for SALFA to stock all its clinics throughout the

[91] God was repeatedly gendered male in their prayers, thus my choice of gendered language here.

island with an adequate number of kits. Lynn e-mailed the manufacturing company to ask about the price and tacked on what he described as a short explanation of Malagasy Partnership. The response from a woman at the company, Lynn said, was to say "that's a really neat organization" and to offer two boxes of 200 finger sticks as a donation. "So God brought the Hemacues," Lynn summarized for those of us seated around him. Lynn's story provided evidence of God's active role in directing supplies to the warehouse. Although he incorporated the detail about his own e-mail description of the agency's work into his story, Lynn emphasized at the time that it was a "short" paragraph, diminishing his own role in prompting the donation. Through his tone and phrasing, he also depicted the paragraph as virtually an afterthought, something he placed within the body of the message in order to share this information but without deliberate intent to persuade his correspondent to donate to the organization. Lynn thus amplified the surprise and gift of the donation by narratively constructing an *absence* of purpose in his own e-mail interaction.

Lynn reinforced the idea that the medical supplies were "called" rather than simply sent through elaborate stories that he would tell about each medical item. One evening two families from Lynn's church, totaling nine people, suddenly arrived at the warehouse during a regular work session. Lynn provided the families with a brief tour, then brought all the volunteers together in the middle of the warehouse for introductions and a short prayer session. As we crowded together in the few open spaces within the warehouse, Lynn pointed out to the guests how "God has kept the warehouse busy" over the past few weeks. He gestured around us in a concentric circle, saying that each large carton or crate facing us "has a story attached to it." Lynn

turned around, drawing our attention to a small wooden crate in the corner of the warehouse nearest the office, partially covered by other cardboard boxes and rubber sorting bins. That box there, Lynn explained, contains pieces of stained glass that have been requested for a small rural church. It came sealed and ready for shipment, as Lynn told us, so he had not been able to examine the glass.

Above us, on second-story-high shelving against the warehouse wall, was a large, appliance-sized cardboard box. That contains some cellos and a violin, Lynn noted. A Korean American mission church established a music program at a school in Madagascar, and they needed a way to ship some instruments for their program. In the back of the warehouse, in front of a bulging pile of boxes that filled the space from ceiling to floor, was a number of boxes that originally carried frozen French fries. These contain some 5400 pairs of eyeglasses, Lynn said, noting that they came to the warehouse through his response to a posting on the TECH Web site. Pointing still further in the arc he drew around us with his finger, Lynn placed our attention on a stack of crutches atop another cardboard box on the second level of shelving. These would be sent to Madagascar, he said, for polio patients.

In remembering the relationships of each supply acquisition, Lynn infused them with qualities of divine agency. Lynn suggested that God was present in each of these relationships and acts of giving. In attaching stories to the supplies, Lynn more implicitly denuded the previous lives of the medical materials in the biomedical institution and accentuated their role in the divinely-orchestrated fabric of social relations. By constructing the medical materials as storied things, Lynn highlighted the way in which Christian people are incorporated into a wider sacred universe and

teleology through the sacred text of the Bible and its stories, which in turn fill their lives with potential futures, roles, scenarios, revelations, and interpretive valence.[92] As Lynn would often say, "Everything has a story." Through his storytelling, the stories became properties *of* the things themselves, which Lynn animated before the listening audience.

In according the supplies their own stories, Lynn prepared them for their subsequent movement outside the space of the warehouse and into the presence of Malagasy patients and practitioners. There the medical supplies would be left to communicate on behalf of their senders. Moreover, the multifunctional stories played an instructional and interpretive role, since they included telling details about the ailments and programs for which they would be *used*. Their animation thus advanced the related value of social action amongst the volunteers. As in the TECH aphorism "No junk for Jesus," it became evident that the gravest sin for people and things alike would be inaction and uselessness. Lynn's storytelling, Mark's concern over junk in the IHM warehouse, and the TECH aphorism adduce a broader social ethics of worldly involvement that uses medical supplies as signs in a social gospel of movement, action, and serviceability.

The discourse on the sinfulness of junk medical supplies indicates that evil forces may be present within the Christian medical supply trade as well. These forces comparably *deny* the rightful agency of the supplies, making them inert, stationary, and non-useful to Lutheran relations overseas. The lack of their movement outside the warehouse makes these supplies into junk, while the junk supplies simultaneously

[92] In the following chapter, I explore in more detail how the medical supplies socially take on person-like attributes.

embody and effuse this quality of stasis and sinfulness. Even though volunteers at IHM and Malagasy Partnership did not often identify the presence of sin in their workspaces, the sinfulness of junk medical supplies was not rid of the warehouses entirely, because in Hetherington's terms, its "absent presence" formed a crucial part of the operations (2004:163). To represent the possibility of sin within each and every medical supply was, therefore, an equal part of reconstituting the things into embodiments of divine agency**.**

The Social Construction of Need

As Lynn once pointed out to me, Malagasy Partnership is engaged in a "continuous refinement of what is needed and what is not." To listen to this statement carefully is also to hear how the identification of need is a central facet of experience for the organization and its volunteers. At both agencies, through abundant linguistic, visual, and artifactual communication about "the need" and "needed" supplies, it became apparent to me over time that volunteers perceive and apprehend their moral and ethical obligation to other people and to the sacred world at large through the social construction of need. To identify need, tell of it, and respond to it is to position oneself as an attentive and engaged Christian person. One observes with the notion of need a complex interaction among subjectively perceived need ("a need") that arises in social relations and need as something more fixed and thing-like ("the need"), a social form that is connected to the Lutheran institutionalization of mission and its social history. Within the

context of the medical aid organizations, I observed both kinds of need coexisting in tension with one another.[93]

Before delving into a longer discussion of this point, it is important to consider the role that the social construction of need, a longstanding trope in missionary writing, has played in the justification of colonial-era missionary evangelism. Many scholarly accounts of colonial missionization concur in their assessment of the paternalism that saturated missionary characterizations of the people they evangelized (see, e.g., Beidelman 1982:127-152; Comaroff 1985:10,124,129,136,140; Meyer 1999:19, 29). Appearing largely as passive bearers of need, evangelized people were imagined to "need" the Gospel in writings to justify the mission enterprise to home audiences, much as they perhaps more implicitly seemed to "need" Christian home-keeping and an assortment of "Western" interventions. These characterizations consequently naturalized and promoted prevalent racial ideologies that underpinned colonial missionization on the whole.

Yet, despite the prevalence of the discourse of need in missionary writing, considerably less scholarly attention has been given to the non-literal uses of the term among contemporary religious practitioners, particularly its poetic and rhetorical functions. This could be because the predominant understanding of need may over-determine its interpretation as a sign that simply *refers to* or denotes bare material circumstances. In other words, through the intertwined and ideological relationship of sign functioning and social interpretation, we may presuppose what need means and, in

[93] One brochure that requested funding for the IHM building expansion proclaimed that the addition would help the organization to "better respond to the needs of our overseas Lutheran health care partners." At one IHM event, the speaker explained that IHM responded to the "tremendous and growing need" in global health care.

the process, neglect the multiple social functions that it serves beyond those that are solely referential. Contrary to what need often presupposes, I suggest then that the elaboration of need is a religious practice within Christianity that has been organized differently in varied social and historical settings.

By looking at the interview excerpts and textual evidence included in Susan Harding's (2000) book on fundamentalist language and politics, it becomes apparent that the discourse of need has broader appeal among American Christians and perhaps forms part of a mass-mediated religious language. Harding's informants engage the discourse of need often, though she does not analyze need as a distinctive trope on its own. Most tellingly, the elaboration of need appears often in Jerry Falwell's sermons that strive to rouse people to action, as in the "deep spiritual need" of man (22, also 107, 162), in *not* needing anything but Christ (97), and in the "desperate need for $5 million" and the request asking "God to supply that need by September 24" (107). Falwell's fundraising appeals subtly placed monetary contributions in a "sacrificial economics," a language that sounds slightly estranging to unfamiliar ears but which signals to believers their role in Christian giving. Harding argues, "The whole point of giving to a God-led ministry is to vacate the commercial economy and to enter another realm, a Christian-centered gospel, or sacrificial, economy in which material expectations are transformed" (109).

Harding's work also demonstrates that born-again converts use the notion of need to highlight their tumultuous state of being just prior to conversion, as in the sense that they were "lost," "searching," or "in need" (38, 44-45, 48, 70). In his personal testimony to Harding, the Reverend Campbell relates the process of his conviction by the Holy Spirit: "But I realized that night there was a need in my life and that need was met, and so

much the spirit of God came to live in my heart" (41). Bringing together the two uses of need found in Harding's ethnography paints a more complex picture of how the discourse of need serves two intertwined, but sometimes conflicting, ends. Falwell frequently encased financial appeals in a language of need in order to make the point that Christian giving was a kind of "sacrifice" that linked the individual donor to the wider Christian social landscape. At the same time, the discourse of need evoked the individual's experience of personal crisis *prior* to attaining a sense of certainty concerning their salvation. This second sense of need ties the act of responding to need-in-the-world to Christian identity and reinforces one's personal relationship with Jesus.

While Harding examines "sacrificial economics" through fundamentalist language and rhetorical strategies, I found in my own research that the notion of need cannot be divested from the other material and sensuous forms through which it finds its evocative power and interpretive relevance. Simon Coleman (2006) makes a comparable argument through his research with Word of Life adherents in Uppsala, Sweden. He writes, "Language cannot simply be divorced from sensual forms in the way that [Harding] suggests, since the power of words is so often demonstrated in their effects on the constitution of the material world as well as the born-again person" (167). Drawing upon a gospel of prosperity and healing, Word of Life participants expand and objectify their spiritual self through words and monetary gifts. Through the anticipated return of blessing, Coleman argues, members "reabsorb" these self-extensions, which "render material one's inner state of faith" (178). Rather than promoting "hyperindividualism," Coleman suggests that donations of money among Word of Life members enact a kind of self-actualization through "reaching out to others" (180). The discourse of need among

Lutheran medical relief workers, I suggest, enacts a similar process of self-expansion. Using monetary gifts (such as written checks), medical supplies, and other visual indicators of need, they tie their unfolding Christian personhood to an external social landscape through which it is understood, fragmented, and refashioned.

Need may be viewed, in this case, as an organizing concept that bears direct relation to the social construction of the world as a sphere of sacred activity and to the unfolding experience of Christian personhood that is inseparably embedded within it. At IHM, the discourse of need was institutionalized within the operation of the non-profit. Before the shipping of a sea container, Mark requested a "needs list" or "needs assessment" from the overseas hospital or clinic and, upon its receipt, he proceeded to locate these "needed items" throughout the warehouse and possibly order unavailable materials from a medical supply distributor. As such, need became associated with the medical supplies themselves, signaling their moral serviceability as well as their handlers' attentive recognition of need-in-the-world. My coworkers did not directly attribute need to their Lutheran relations in other world regions in my presence, as in the notion of being "needy," or reduce these relations to their material circumstances in the sense that need often implies in common American English usage.

While the social construction of need carries a variety of implications and problematic presuppositions into each interaction, which I address further below, I suggest here that the experience and identification of need has certain socially dominant uses among American Lutheran aid workers. The importance of need as a way of perceiving and being in the world often escapes direct notice in everyday interaction. On some occasions, however, people directly evoked, enumerated, and visualized need as a

way to build a sense of moral responsibility for a specific worldly problem among their coworkers and to further the development of their Christian social consciousness.

"If you see a need, that's where it is," Lynn commented to me one Thursday evening as we unpacked several black garbage bags of linens and sorted the contents into cardboard cartons of drapes and surgical gowns. He was summarizing the main point of a story that he told me as we worked together. Philip, a young man from Lynn's church who volunteers periodically at the warehouse with his wife Leah, had recently brought a list of items Malagasy Partnership could use to his primary care physician during a scheduled visit. Lynn depicted Philip as "eager" and optimistic, thinking the doctor might have some of the medical supplies on hand and be willing to donate them to Malagasy Partnership. Lynn said Philip was dismayed by the reaction of his doctor, who questioned why these supplies should go to Madagascar and not somewhere else. In Lynn's narration, Philip had trouble answering the question, other than to point out that the organization assisting the Malagasy Lutheran health care system existed locally and it was the group with which he was involved. The doctor was committed to sending medical relief to Bangladesh, Lynn said, a country that "rivals" Madagascar as one of the poorest countries in the world according to the World Bank. Lynn opined that Bangladesh has a shortage of practicing physicians; Malagasy Lutherans he knows envy the Bangladeshi system and some have actually moved to Bangladesh to work there.

Lynn indicated that the two countries might appear comparable in their gross domestic product (which they are not, at least by this measure), since he evoked these statistics in his discussion, but that they faced different problems in the provision of health care. Lynn's narrative pointed toward the importance of procuring medical

supplies for SALFA and constructed a situation in Bangladesh where medical supplies were more accessible. Yet he simultaneously did not discount the physician's estimation of the situation and his personal response to Philip's request. As he pointedly concluded, "If you see a need, that's where it is."

Lynn's statement suggested interestingly that need, far from being something measured objectively on a scale of varying degrees, is part of a personal interpretation and mode of perception. Lynn acceded to the existence of need all across the world, yet ultimately indicated that need became "real" and became part of a Christian worldly landscape and vision when someone perceived it. From prior conversations on the subject with Lynn, I had learned that he views the perception of need, and the moral responsibility that accompanies it, as part of a spiritual calling. Lynn has felt a spiritual connection to Madagascar since he was a young man, when he became aware of the country through his uncle's mission work in Manambaro. Lynn's relativism on the subject of "need" factored the subjective experience of divine communication into the process of perceiving need and into its existence, made "real" for each person according to his or her "heart." From this perspective, to see a need and identify it socially as such was a multifaceted communication about the spiritual connection or covenant a person felt pushed (or "called") to make with someone else or concerning a specific place or issue.

In my presence people sometimes distinguished their recognition of need as something that made them a missionary, almost like a personal calling from God. Harriet told me on one occasion in the IHM sorting room that it was through her brother and sister-in-law, who first traveled as missionaries to Cameroon five years before she did in

1954, that she "learned of the need" in Cameroon. In Harriet's estimation, forming a sense of the need appeared as part of an unfolding spiritual calling where one's eyes are opened to the situation of the world at large and a response is imperative if not impossible to avoid. Importantly, she never said that she went to Ngaoundéré, Cameroon as a missionary nurse because her brother and sister-in-law were there or directly because of their guidance, something that could neglect the role of a spiritual calling and of the guidance of the Spirit in her decision to pursue mission work. If we listen to her words ("learned of the need"), she placed her relations in a passive role (e.g., forming an understanding of the need *through* them) and provided me with the sense that her recognition of "the need" laid the groundwork for her spiritual calling.

As cultural interpreters and intermediaries, missionaries held the duty of identifying for fellow American Lutherans, through their role as institutional actors, "the [worldly] need" to which laypeople should be responding. This duty reflected the overarching role of missionaries as socially recognized leaders in the church, who fulfilled a series of influential interpretive functions for fellow congregants. The ability to communicate "the need" to churchgoers in the United States constituted part of the informal duty of the missionary to the church. The term became part of a representational shorthand that was used by missionaries in their deputation work, when they were on leave from the mission field and traveling through the Midwest United States. Each deputation presentation contained at least two parts: the context and the need. The listening audience could identify the financial appeal for support within the presentation of "the need," a rhetorical shift that encased the appeal for monetary aid in moral terms. Through such visual images as maps and slide shows, their presentations produced the

Christian social world as something that could be inhabited by the viewing and listening audience. [94]

In making the case for financial and spiritual support on behalf of the mission institution, Lutheran missionaries verbally identified "the need" (oftentimes, for the Gospel) that they had experienced personally through their spiritual calling and field experiences. In their deputation presentations and written communication to American congregants, they translated the particular needs, which were specific to their own personal relationships as missionaries, into a broader discourse of the American institution acting collectively in the world. They rhetorically enabled the audience to participate in the missionary's personal response to "the need" but ultimately subsumed it within the collective project of the church. Such presentations relied upon the understanding that missionaries were individual persons, each with unique callings, but were also composite figures within the church institution, theoretically encompassing and incorporating the many congregants who financed, supported, and participated in their labor. Missionaries operated as interpreters who interlinked their personal experience of worldly need, the wider Christian social world, the church institution, and individual American congregants. Furthermore, in labeling need, missionaries identified the worldly role that could be played by churchgoers and directed their attention to a finite, carefully defined narrative problem. They selectively produced the worldly need and connected its definition to the collective action of the church institution.

[94] This was not at all a new interpretive position in the history of the Christian church, but one that missionaries filled as twentieth-century institutional representatives. Sheldrake (2001:38) points out that generations of holy men and holy women, hermits and monastics who lived in the Christianized world of late antiquity through the Middle Ages, served the crucial role of "localizing the Christian God" as well as "personalizing the forces of the cosmos for ordinary believers."

In the context of shifting approaches to mission work, I suggest that the rhetorical production of need, as in deputation presentations, coexisted in continuous tension with the kind of need that Lynn had identified, a subjective and personal response to the call from God. At one IHM fundraising dinner for SALFA, which was attended by many former Madagascar missionaries, the production of several needs seemed to compete with each other and to cloud the attendants' evaluation of to which issue they should be responding. In the absence of one missionary to carefully prioritize worldly needs and organize them into a hierarchy, the dinner presentations in fact distinguished several needs. This became an interpretive dilemma for a listening audience that was accustomed to its precise identification.

Too Many Needs: Interpreting Need at an IHM Fundraising Dinner

About 40 people had gathered in early April 2006 for the IHM event at Birchwood Lutheran Church in a large dining hall adjacent to the main sanctuary. Lois appeared to orchestrate much of the event, since Birchwood, a large suburban ELCA church in St. Paul, was her home congregation. The dining hall bore the pale décor of a conference center, having no windows, fluorescent lights, and a long rectangular shape that framed a smattering of circular dining tables with chairs. The dinner, cooked by the kitchen staff of the church, was spread across several long tables in a buffet line. Lois had taken the time to decorate each table with a bright Malagasy *lamba*, draped over the standard white dining cloth provided by the church. The CD "Avtrykk" (Norwegian, Impressions), a compilation of Malagasy songs originally recorded by nineteenth-century Norwegian missionaries and now performed by Norwegian singer Kari Iveland with a

Malagasy choir in Tulear, played from a small stereo on a table near the entryway to the room. While the speakers began the evening's program, Matthew, an education professor and former missionary to Madagascar, bustled about the room collecting dishes after the dinner and ensuring there was room on the tables for the chocolate bars and coffee that would be served for dessert.

The overall program of the fundraising dinner involved two primary "appeals for support." One was the presentation of a study that had been conducted by an American nursing professor in conjunction with the Malagasy director of *Sekoly Fanomanana Mpitsabo* or SEFAM, the Malagasy Lutheran nursing school in Antsirabe. The other was an "urgent appeal" for funds to support the SALFA pharmaceutical fund, the primary source of money to maintain the centralized administration of SALFA's nine hospitals and 39 dispensaries. The pharmaceutical fund allows SALFA to purchase and stock drugs for its clinics from the International Development Association (IDA) based in The Netherlands. Since the IDA discounts pharmaceuticals for eligible countries, SALFA acquires many of its most-needed medicines from the agency. The fund makes these pharmaceuticals available to people in a timely fashion. SALFA has to pay for the medications up-front, but its hospitals and dispensaries do not have adequate funds to pay for the drugs they request nor do the majority of patients who frequent the clinics. The small patient fees assessed to those who are able to offer monetary recompense for medical services do not create sufficient revenue for the hospitals and dispensaries to purchase their own pharmaceuticals. If SALFA had to wait for the clinics to obtain the funds necessary to purchase the pharmaceuticals they need, then, patients would not receive the medications in time for their treatment.

Included in a blue folder for each dinner attendant was a copy of an e-mail message Norman had written to Elizabeth Hansen, an IHM board member, on behalf of Clément (the SALFA liaison for both Malagasy Partnership and IHM), stating the urgency of the request plainly. "The pharmaceutical fund is the heart of SALFA on which the whole of SALFA rises or falls," Norman wrote in underlined text. He went on to note:

> It is from the purchase of drugs at IDA and the resale of these drugs with a markup for handling (ordering, reception, storage, distribution) that SALFA survives … SALFA is able to distribute these drugs to all the health centers at prices that are usually about one half of similar drugs that would be purchased at local commercial pharmacies. The health centers themselves then add their own markup so that they too can survive. All this in the context that the health centers themselves, also, do not receive support or subsidies for running expenses.

Norman's e-mail message went on to divide the request from SALFA into two categories: 1) the context and 2) the need. The monetary concerns were listed under the section entitled "the need." At the time, SALFA required a total of $225,000 in order to maintain its pharmaceutical fund. Of this total, $40,000 was granted to SALFA by IHM in 2005. Elizabeth Hansen, the adult daughter of Madagascar medical missionaries who was acting as an emcee for the event, extended the floor to Norman for a few minutes during which time he gestured to the printed e-mail in the blue folder and said a few words about the critical importance of the SALFA pharmaceutical fund. Norman indicated in this brief speech that the current situation in which SALFA found itself could mean its demise if not resolved. He noted that the ELCA had donated some money to increase IHM's grant to $150,000; each order of medical supplies, filling a 20-cubic-foot sea container, cost $75,000 from the IDA.

When Hansen again took the floor, she added that IHM could not provide the amount of money required to secure the pharmaceutical fund, so it "needed someone to

come through." She went on to note that she and other people at SALFA and IHM were "counting on the Madagascar support" to "fulfill their commitments" to the people of the country. This plea for help appeared heavy on the small, elderly group of retired missionaries before us that evening, and Hansen seemed to place it squarely on their shoulders. She then commented that she and others at IHM were "asking for support for what you've supported for more than 100 years. We need prayer from you, [who are] prayer warriors." Hansen extended the request for financial assistance collectively from herself, IHM, and SALFA to the audience members ("we need .."). She asked first for their prayer rather than for financial aid, the latter being something that was implied in her comments but not stated directly. Hansen's request evoked a 100-year history of involvement with Madagascar, referencing the apical point of Hogstad's initial journey as an American Lutheran missionary to southern Madagascar in 1888. By using the deictic "you," she placed those in the room in this heritage, extending back one hundred years in a continuous line of work. To turn a blind eye to the current problems facing SALFA, then, would be to also threaten the progression of this work and the accomplishments of the missionary predecessors implicated in Hansen's statement.

The second presentation in the evening's program, however, appeared to compete with the urgency of the pharmaceutical fund situation and to cause some of the people attending the dinner to be uncertain of the event's ultimate purpose. Sally Martin, an IHM board member and professor of nursing, had given a PowerPoint travel narrative in combination with the findings of the study she conducted with the Malagasy director of SEFAM. As I was talking with Elizabeth Hansen at the end of the evening, Karen Angas approached her, placing her hands on Elizabeth's shoulders in an affectionate gesture. "I

wish I had known more what this was gonna be about," Angas, a former missionary and child of missionaries, said, her husband standing a few feet behind her. "I guess I thought it was just a Madagascar missionary gathering …," Angas paused and Elizabeth responded with a sympathetic "oh." Continuing, Angas said: "I would have brought some nursing friends I have." Angas appeared to understand the event's ulimate focus to be the nursing school. In her presentation, Martin had made a call to the audience for nursing school instructors willing to aid the program in restructuring its curriculum, as well as to SALFA's need for additional nurses in its clinics. From the tone of her comment, Angas hoped to interest some of her "nursing friends" in volunteering to work in Madagascar or possibly in sending supplies and/or medical texts to SEFAM. The critical situation of the SALFA pharmaceutical fund, and the state of SALFA as a whole, appeared to recede from focus in the concluding conversation between Angas and Hansen.

At the close of the program, those attending were asked by Pastor Dale Westland, the IHM executive director, to "keep the light shining" through Lutheran health care programs. He noted that he "hoped [people attending would] be inspired to provide support to keep this ministry going." In terms I heard him use on other occasions, Dale lightly commented that if people "felt called to do so," they could pass their checks to Elizabeth Hansen at the end of the program or place them in the basket situated on each table. I watched from my seat at one of the rear tables in the dining room as those beside me at the table, Lois, Hank, and Lillian, as well as Iris near the front of the room and Grace Anderson at a table to the right, promptly pulled out their checkbooks and began writing. With heads bowed over the multi-colored fabric of the tablecloths and pens shading the lines before them, they responded almost simultaneously with the first verbal

call to giving that Dale made, before he finished speaking the text of his witness to the importance of Lutheran health care programs globally.

Importantly, though, the call to giving did not specifically reference where the donated money would be going. Dale did not specify whether the money would go directly to a general IHM fund for SALFA projects, to SALFA itself and specifically the pharmaceutical fund, or to SEFAM. At least from my observation of the exchange between Hansen and Angas, it appeared that people had different ideas about the focus of the dinner. Dale's concluding comments placed all of the "needs" spoken to by the presenters that evening in a more general discourse appealing to the entire operation of IHM: the need to "keep the light of Christ burning." When I talked to Lois on the following Tuesday at the IHM lunch table, she appeared happy with the outcome of the dinner, but didn't know if for IHM it was [financially] "what they [in the office, Dale and Dagmar perhaps] wanted." She had not heard how much money was raised from the dinner.

At the fundraising dinner, different uses of need, subtle variations by generation and context, arose and interrupted the seamless rhetorical appeal that Norman endeavored to convey concerning the SALFA pharmaceutical fund. Drawing upon his forty years of experience as a medical missionary, Norman framed his written appeal to the audience as if it were the spoken text of a deputation presentation, plainly identifying "the context" and "the need." In some ways, he knew precisely to whom he would be making his appeal, to his former coworkers in Madagascar who were present that evening. In this context, the verbal construction of "the need" served to orient people and organize them around a specific social and financial responsibility. On the whole, though, the rhetorical

identification of other needs within the evening's program served to *dis*orient some of the attendants, for they had a hard time pinpointing which need held the greater social and financial importance. In the absence of a single missionary acting as an institutional representative, the participants seemed to give varying and incompatible significance to the multiple needs contained within the presentations. They lacked one overarching, hermeneutic vision that wove together the universal need for the Gospel, which Dale had evoked, with a particular hierarchy of worldly needs to which they could respond.

Dilemmas of Visualizing and Enumerating Need

At Malagasy Partnership, people did not talk *about* need nearly as much as at IHM, although Lynn occasionally drew attention to it verbally as he did in his earlier story. Instead, Lynn suggested to me that he enumerated and visualized need for his agency's volunteers, producing didactic tools through which the volunteer workers could learn and locate themselves in the world. Economic figures played an important role in suggesting to the volunteers, most of whom had never before traveled to Madagascar, that SALFA could not always purchase from the international market the medical materials that were collected in Minnesota. In part, these economic figures constructed need and placed volunteers in a pivotal and moral role of working to rectify the inequalities Lynn laid before them.

On one occasion, Philip asked Lynn whether people in Madagascar could make some of their own medical supplies; he worked for a local company that constructed medical catheters and knew that Teflon was the raw material most needed to shape the narrow plastic piping. "There just aren't the raw materials or the kind of operation in

Madagascar to do that," Lynn said. "Often Malagasy people can't afford to buy back on the global market the goods that they make or contribute to before these are exported." With these economic lessons, Lynn attempted to convey some of the inequalities of the capitalist market in which Malagasy Partnership operated. Lynn frequently constructed in conversation, just before each work period's closing prayer session, what one might call a "global economic sphere" in which the cost of medical care was incommensurate with the median income of a Malagasy person.

In early January 2006, Lynn sent an e-mail message to most Malagasy Partnership supporters and SALFA contacts with a statement that President George W. Bush had made in a recent speech. The president asserted that the average Malagasy person at the time made $2 per day. The e-mail message that Lynn sent sparked several replies, which included all of the initial recipients. One written response came from Clément, the Malagasy Lutheran man who acts as primary liaison between Malagasy Partnership and SALFA. Clément was familiar to many of the volunteers, since he had been a personal guest of Lynn's family during his U.S. visit a few years earlier. In his e-mail, Clément disagreed with President Bush's claim, noting than an average in effect told very little about how most Malagasy people actually live. The median would be far more telling, he said. He argued that most Malagasy people live on much less than $2 per day, and went on to ask his American correspondents to tell President Bush why his economic incentives were not working in Madagascar. He described the remaining "paternalism" he sees between Madagascar and France and the poor economic policies and ventures with France that still affect Madagascar's global position. The e-mail trail faded after that time; no one replied to the entire group in response to Clément's message, which

appeared to present a resounding conclusion to the discussion. Although no e-mails were sent to everyone in response, Lynn mentioned the dialogue in our following Malagasy Partnership work session, asking whether anyone else had followed the exchange. He said that while he was initially surprised by the strong tone of Clément's message, since his e-mails were typically light, congenial, and oftentimes written in a joking manner, he was in agreement with all of the points that Clément had made.

In this give and take of information, the stark economic figure that Lynn initially sent to Malagasy Partnership supporters had served more to incite American volunteers to action rather than to carefully examine the different economies of particular regions within Madagascar, let alone of the post-colonial nation-state. As Clément pointed out with his e-mail response, the figure cited by President Bush purported to simultaneously represent the Malagasy income of everyone and no one. The figure, as an average, was not contextualized in a local economy of the country. Malagasy Partnership volunteers, on the whole, lacked the experiential knowledge of Madagascar that would enable one to imagine the varying socio-economic conditions of daily life on the island. Moreover, as a statistical creation, the figure did not at all address the spectrum of incomes among Malagasy people that were combined to form the average.

Among Malagasy Partnership volunteers, the average income figure and other statistics placed a specific kind of moral-economic value upon the labor of the volunteers, while prompting them to imagine a daily reality different from their own. Lynn wanted his fellow volunteers to develop their moral obligation to the people of Madagascar. Yet, by evoking an economic figure, he brought into the moral lesson another, contradictory logic that threatened to reduce this obligation to the capitalist relations implied through

the statistical form. Lynn employed these didactic tools in order to teach the younger volunteers about a place they had not otherwise known or seen and to spark the self-development that was presumed to accompany the recognition of worldly need.

Still, as hermeneutic forms, these statistical figures carried the double edge of potentially linking the Malagasy relations of the American volunteers with a fixed economic calculus associated with poverty. Among the Malagasy Partnership volunteers, other activities tended to counter the reduction and objectification of social relations potentially produced through the average income figure. Lynn brought the volunteers into the work of SALFA by repeatedly mentioning the names of SALFA employees, offering telling narrative glimpses of their character, and referencing them often. They became a part of the social relations of the warehouse space through Lynn's subtle yet significant efforts.

In the Malagasy Partnership building, Lynn surrounded the volunteers not only with storied medical materials and evoked economic figures but also with specific things that represent Madagascar, including textiles, maps, the prayer board, and photographs. One evening after the prayer session ended and most volunteers had gone home, Lynn mentioned to me the difficulty of conveying to people in Minnesota what Madagascar is like. Lynn implied that he struggled with the politics of representing need visually without drawing upon or reinstating people's preconceptions of Africa and of Africans. In an ensuing story, Lynn explained that Emmanuel, a Malagasy Lutheran pastor who completed his seminary training in St. Paul and has become a personal friend of Lynn and his family, taught him one lesson about the issue.

In the late 1980s, in the presence of a visiting group that included Emmanuel, Lynn brought out a series of photographs of Madagascar that he passed around. Breaking the narrative frame momentarily, Lynn explained to me that he had selected the photographs in part to show "the need," as he phrased it, something that he felt he had to do in order to gain support for Malagasy Partnership in the United States. At the time, Emmanuel objected to the photographs and expressed his dissatisfaction with what they showed of the country. "Why do you have a photograph of the tiny Ejeda dirt airstrip, and this small village dispensary?," he asked Lynn, according to Lynn's telling. Emmanuel told Lynn that he should post photographs of the new terminal at the airport in the capital and of a brand-new, large SALFA hospital. "He was proud of his country," Lynn offered.

Concluding his story, Lynn gestured to the photographs on the wall behind us, and he said that they have changed as a result of the conversation. (See Figure 5.2) Explaining what had motivated his initial selection, Lynn said, "If you show someone here a photograph of a brand-new, state-of-the-art hospital, they may not believe that help is needed." Lynn several times mentioned that Emmanuel had taught an important lesson that he attempted to heed by striking a balance between visually depicting "modern" buildings and technologies in Madagascar with his commitment to show Americans places where they might "help."

Figure 5.3. “Glimpses of SALFA,” the current display of photographs that Lynn changed after his conversation with Emmanuel

Lynn’s explanation reveals that visually depicted, enumerated, and spoken “needs” have formed a language of communication among missionaries and their supporters. Without identifiable need, Lynn worried that churchgoers may not figure out how to support the work of Malagasy Partnership. The representation of need was the familiar form for discussing “ways to help” but it did not necessarily mean a complete reduction of people’s lives to basic necessities. In some ways, Lynn was savvy to realize that he had to couch his appeals for financial donations and other forms of assistance in a multi-faceted discourse of need. Still, he attempted to avoid some of the stereotypes that the communication of need could evoke. This was in fact the double bind of need, as it relates to the contemporary pursuit of global mission among Lutherans. Aid workers frequently evoked the notion in order to encase worldly involvement in a religious language and to construct a personal sense of responsibility for the world outside of one’s immediate environment. Yet as Lynn indicated, in the process of using this representational form they brought in some of the lingering implications and associations

of need with the racial ideologies that plagued the pursuit of foreign missions within the church.

In the context of shifting theologies of mission, the social construction of need as a central representational form for worldly involvement also illuminates a wider predicament. Competing understandings of mission work exist among Lutheran supporters and the two non-profits participate in the ongoing effort to unify these approaches into a single model of "accompaniment." As I described earlier in the dissertation, the ELCA has adopted the accompaniment model of global mission as one way to address and rectify the paternalism that is associated with the past institutionalization of foreign missions in the church. While the accompaniment program finds support across a wide range of Lutheran theological positions, not everyone agrees with the ELCA stance that the pursuit of overseas mission work should be abandoned as an institutional and collective undertaking.

As Lynn suggested at the beginning of this section, the multiplicity of identifiable needs is connected to the personal pursuit of Christian social action. In the absence of an overarching institution to identify need and to represent it as a collective pursuit, it potentially becomes as varied as the pursuit of global mission in the singular, a way of finding one's ethical place in the world through short-term mission trips, non-profit volunteer work, and humanitarian relief projects. In its non-referential senses, need has partly identified one's responsibility as a participant in an institutional collective. With the dissolution of the mission institution, the interpretive position vacated by missionaries has left other global actors, such as non-profits, to select and prioritize worldly need for American Lutheran congregants. Additionally, the social construction of need has shifted

to reflect the contemporary understanding of mission work as a personal pursuit, as well as the opening of the vocation to laypeople within many Protestant sects. At IHM and Malagasy Partnership, this shift was perhaps best expressed through the migration of "need" to the supplies themselves, each of which became "needed" things in response to a varied and populous field of need.

Conclusion

In their volunteer labor, agency supporters in Minnesota explore some of the uncertainties, history, and moral dilemmas of the mission movement. Both non-profit organizations support two countervailing, yet complementary, circulations in refining their approach to global mission. One is the narrative dissemination of economic figures, visual images, and stories of supply acquisitions, which serve to build the moral responsibility of American volunteers to their Lutheran relations elsewhere and to the social world more generally. These didactic tools strive to cultivate an attentive and knowledgeable moral collective among American Lutherans, in contrast to the absence of informed action and equity that is seen to characterize a number of previous aid efforts. These qualities of personal behavior are projected as modes of collective action. Following the labor of selecting and sorting appropriate medical supplies, the collectives subsequently dispatch the potential of these ethical relations to other places.

Within the circulation of stories and other instructional tools in Minnesota, aid workers selectively emphasize a related *absence* of purpose in their work, which heightens the divine orchestration of social relations. By highlighting that the supplies have been "called," aid workers, in fact, reinforce the notion that they have been carefully and thoughtfully selected. The underlying idea is that, if the materials show the marks of

divine agency, they exist as the product of a three-way communication, whereby Lutheran relations elsewhere have expressed their medical needs to the divine and the divine has prompted the supplies' procurement. Yet the aid workers suggest that tensions potentially arise in negotiating the different ways of communicating with and imagining these interlocutors. One tension exists in the non-profits between underscoring the care with which each supply has been acquired in relation to the past, while emphasizing through narratives the absence of their own purpose and knowledge in relation to God.

I have argued in this chapter that the construction of future use-value in the medical supplies is not simply a utilitarian exercise but operates more fundamentally as a reworking of ethical relations among global Lutherans. The existence of junk supplies, whether by a visually apparent wall sign or the sense of the sinful behavior from which it stems, is a continual reminder of the new moral danger present in backsliding to less stringent standards for aid provision. Moreover, volunteer laborers in both organizations are taught that they may need to *create* waste in their work, rather than avoiding its moral stigma by sending it elsewhere. Cumulatively, this effort strives, as Mark had indicated, to foreground Lutheran relations overseas in the collection and evaluation of medical supplies for shipment. The imagined Lutheran relations, therefore, become part of the medical supplies within the Minnesota warehouses (as "partners"), for the potential usefulness of the supplies may only be realized in their hands. Yet in the context of shifting mission theologies, Minnesota aid workers, who are committed to the TECH standards and other initiatives of ethical practice, find it difficult to control the wide range of interpretations and representations of their collective work that circulate among supporters. The supplies themselves contain marks of the biomedical institutions, which

aid workers endeavor to erase or downplay in their effort to place the needs of their Lutheran relations above the convenience of hospital donations.

Through the medical supply transactions, volunteer workers indicate that they engage in a related reform and reclamation of the collective moral person through giving away, a form of exchange that is productive in its ability to construct the person through its circulation or effacement. In her work on fundamentalist language and politics, Harding (2000) found that born-again Christians placed need in their conversion stories as a way of representing the sense of loss and personal crisis prior to their being brought under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. The recognition of being "in need" was crucial to the experience of conversion, since the convert's new life was known in relation to these narrated prior moments. If considered in the context of the medical non-profits, the experience of responding to an identified need-in-the-world is perhaps akin to small moments of rebirth for the believer, or an act of "dying to their old selves" as Harding (2000:47) calls it. These perceptual acts of recognizing worldly need consequently tie people, as part of collectives, to the social landscape of need while advancing the growth of their Christian social consciousness and their personal experience of the collective's transformation and rebirth.

Through the medical non-profits, former missionaries and their supporters strive to change American Lutherans' relationship to waste and wastefulness, knowing that missionaries are no longer present as intermediaries and "converters" of things among Lutheran church members. While this effort aims to establish more equitable relations among American Lutherans and Malagasy Lutherans, the interaction among the American non-profits and SALFA also brings about more implicit forms of

accountability for SALFA. These include annual financial reports, distribution records, individual testimonies concerning the use of large donations, and medical inventories, which are increasingly required by the American organizations for their own records as well as the process of applying for separate grants in the United States. This “burden attached” to the medical supply exchange is but one tension that remains an obstacle in achieving the ideal of full partnership through the redirection of medical technologies (Mauss 1950[1990]:41).

CHAPTER 6:
BANDAGES THAT BIND: DILEMMAS OF PERSONHOOD AND PRODUCTIVITY IN LUTHERAN MEDICAL AID

> He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds. - Psalm 143:7
>
> We are an instrument through which your love and compassion are channeled for the health and hope of God's children around the world! -IHM Web site, accessed January 29, 2007

Introduction

As I described in the previous chapter, International Health Mission acquires used and new medical supplies and equipment from single donors, doctors in private practice, local hospitals, and medical manufacturers, seizing the opportunities presented when clinics switch supply or equipment vendors and older models become obsolete in the swift flux of biomedical markets. Volunteer laborers at IHM and Malagasy Partnership transform these donated manufactured medical supplies into divinely "called" things. This practice of reconstitution, I argued, should be understood as part of a wider effort to establish ethical relations between American Lutherans and Lutherans in sites of former American missionary evangelism. At IHM, though, agency supporters engaged in producing things in yet another sense. Rather than focus on the reconstitution of manufactured medical materials here, my primary focus in this chapter will be the production of knit and crocheted bandages and rolled sheet bandages among IHM supporters. Bandage-making projects comprise two in a series of four projects devised by

International Health Mission to link its supporters directly with the Lutheran medical work performed overseas.[95] The promise of the organization's maxim "Helping the Hands that Heal" figures prominently in the creation of hand-made bandages, the most popular projects among IHM supporters if judged by sheer numbers alone.[96]

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the tensions that arise for IHM in the production and dispersal of these handmade bandages, which strive to meet the diverse needs of its two primary constituencies: American Lutheran supporters and Lutheran health care workers overseas. On the one hand, among volunteer laborers at the IHM warehouse in Minneapolis, the bandages held person-like qualities through their close association with the prayer, hand labor, and "productivity" of the bandage makers. I describe below how IHM supporters drew attention to the person-like attributes of the bandages, which they blessed at the altar in church services, incorporated into personal prayers, and endowed with hand-written notes that directly addressed the bandage recipients. On the other hand, however, the IHM staff and volunteers expressed some concerns that the hand-made bandages, a standing donation sent automatically with almost every shipment, may be too readily identified with their makers and might not meet the specific institutional standards of Lutheran medical practitioners. The chapter

[95] The other two projects are Midwife Kits and AIDS Hospice Kits.

[96] As of June 2006, the current stock of hand-work projects in the IHM warehouse could be broken down as follows:

	Tropical Ulcer Bandages	**Rolled Sheet Bandages**	**Midwife Kits**	**AIDS Hospice Kits**
Total Number	14,453	250,422	13,433	2,256
Volume $(Ft.)^3$	33.73	408	1390	311
Volume in Pallets	7	8.5	29	6.5
Weight (Lb.)	2,939	7,366	12,851	6,556

During my time at IHM, the agency received at least 300 knit and crocheted bandages each week from private persons and Lutheran auxiliary groups from Texas to Pennsylvania, and a far greater number of rolled sheet bandages.

explores the following questions: How do IHM supporters construct and experience bandage-making as a devotional practice? What tensions arise in trying to make handmade bandages into both devotional forms and useful biomedical tools?

Arriving from across the United States in shoeboxes, mail parcels, and hefty cardboard cartons, both items translate handcrafts into objects of biomedical utility. Made from knit or crocheted white cotton yarn, "tropical ulcer bandages," as they are called by the agency, have been designed to form a spongy outer layer of protection for an open wound on an extremity. The bandage protects the wound from further injury after it has been cleaned, an anti-bacterial salve applied, and a sterile dressing has been wrapped tightly around it as a primary layer. (See Figure 6.2) Rolled sheet bandages, made from the cut strips of bedsheets, are designated as the second layer for a less serious wound, scrape, or cut on a finger, hand, or foot.

Due to their cloth construction, both bandages can be washed, even boiled, sterilized, and reused, one of the prized features of the project for an organization concerned with the "sustainability" of its donations and the moral implications of use and waste. The cloth bandages differ from most manufactured bandages, which have been designed for only one use. With noteworthy regularity, bandage makers tape or pin a paper with their names and the number produced to the bandages within the boxes (in addition to the address label that appears on the exterior surface). Some also fasten personal notes, affirmations or devotional booklets to the top layer of bandages, unaware that the boxes will be individually opened and repacked at the IHM warehouse.

In the discussion that follows, I first describe how the bandages take shape as gendered material things in the space of the IHM warehouse, where they are sometimes

associated with the organized service work of the mid-twentieth-century Women's Missionary Federations. Following a brief recent history of bandage-making, I suggest that a religious ideology of the sense of touch mediates the activity of bandage construction and holds the potential to permit a kind of "seeing" through tactility, aided by representations of the hands as instruments and channels for the pursuit of worldly religious service. Moreover, I explore how bandage-makers marked their crafts with hand-written notes in order to help secure their gift status. These notes also draw attention to the text-like qualities of the bandages, which their makers' construct as material instantiations of the gospel of salvation and the act of spoken prayer. Finally, I examine how IHM volunteers framed some of the uncertainties of their aid exchanges through the ongoing social evaluation of "productivity" in the agency's Minneapolis headquarters, an activity that indelibly tied the discernible qualities of the bandages to the personhood of the bandage makers.

Figure 6.1. A retired missionary to Madagascar (at left) and a fellow congregant fold and attach printed notes to blankets and quilts destined for an overseas shipment of medical supplies.

Figure 6.2. “Tropical Ulcer Bandages,” as they arrive at the IHM warehouse

Bandage-Making in Historical Perspective

Although some IHM volunteers knit and crochet bandages or roll sheet bandages, and still others transport bandages from their home congregations and family members to the agency, most bandage-makers are not known personally by the staff and volunteers of International Health Mission. Volunteers, however, speculate on the bandage makers’ identities and thus construct them as a less visible, satellite workforce through conversations in the space of the warehouse. One morning a 28-year-old woman named Sheila, trained as an obstetrics and gynecology nurse, joined another regular volunteer and I in the warehouse. We were unpacking donation boxes of medical supplies from congregations in Sheila’s regional synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Through the ELCA’s Companion Synod program, Sheila’s synod in southeast Iowa had prepared a shipment for a hospital of its “sister church” in Gonja, Cameroon. Some congregants in the southeast Iowa synod had ties to hospitals where they were able to acquire precisely what Gonja practitioners requested on the “needs list” they submitted to International Health Mission. Other people put together AIDS Hospice Kits or Midwife Kits in their homes and churches, some people sent used medical supplies and

new personal hygiene items purchased from a drugstore, and still others rolled and packed several hundred sheet bandages.

Over the course of the morning, Sheila and I emptied at least ten boxes of rolled sheet bandages, and she heard our coworkers Lois, Carolyn, and Dagmar express concern regarding the frayed and worn condition of some of them.[97] Although no one directed their displeasure to her, Sheila assumed a personal responsibility for providing an explanation concerning both the worn condition of some of the bandages, as well as the overwhelming number. The bishop of the synod, Sheila explained, had placed an announcement on the synod Web site that "called for" rolled sheet bandages for the Gonja shipment. "There were lots of little old ladies who made rolled sheet bandages for the shipment," Sheila said. "It was something they could do." She acknowledged the sincerity of the "ladies'" efforts, while deflecting responsibility for the quality and quantity of those before us.

In her explanation, Sheila evoked a familiar representation of elderly churchwomen as both maligned and beloved social figures. She relied in part upon her interlocutors' familiarity with humorous representations of "church ladies" as people who work for the church selflessly, tirelessly, and in spaces of alterity (e.g., the church basement). Sheila's statement sought to absolve herself from direct involvement with the bandages before us that morning. It simultaneously, however, created the bandages as gendered works of faith, intimately bound to a remembered past of women's service to

[97] My interest in the bandages presented a curiosity for many regular warehouse volunteers, who appeared to see the bandages and their volume as nothing less than expected contributions to the IHM effort. Over time, my coworkers Lois, Harriet, and others teasingly deemed me the agency's "bandage expert" and I quickly assumed the responsibility of unpacking, counting, and examining the contents of almost every knit and crocheted bandage parcel that arrived at the warehouse. Even after I left Minneapolis, Lois wrote me an e-mail one afternoon to exclaim: "I have thought of you so many times! Especially when it comes to packing those tropical bandages … I spent my day counting those bandages and boxing them------that is when I kept thinking of YOU."

the church. In this particular context, the representational form of the bandage, in combination with the mediation of language, played an integral role not only in "expressing social difference … [but also] in producing [it] – in objectifying and making inhabitable the categories by which social difference is understood and evaluated" (Keane 2007: 17).

The bandages, more than other material things at IHM, call forth a gendered model of Lutheran service that forms a significant history and foundation for the organization. IHM's role of assisting or "helping" Lutheran doctors working overseas bears several similarities to the earlier role the Women's Missionary Federations (WMF) constructed for themselves in relation to the American Lutheran churches and their foreign mission boards. Both the Lutheran Free Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which sent missionaries to southern Madagascar, had their own Women's Missionary Federations. These national organizations with local, circuit, and regional leadership grew from women's sewing societies that were established in German, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish Lutheran churches of the Upper Midwest beginning in the 1860s and 1870s (Lagerquist 1987).

The Women's Missionary Federation of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (after 1946, the Evangelical Lutheran Church) existed from 1917 until 1960, when it became American Lutheran Church Women (ALCW). [98] This organization, which was part of the American Lutheran Church, increasingly focused on improving the

[98] The Lutheran Free Church (LFC) joined the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1963; both the Lutheran Free Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church had separate Women's Missionary Federations (WMF) and distinct mission fields in south Madagascar until that point, although the LFC WMF often used promotional materials produced by the larger and more expansive ALC WMF. The American Lutheran Church (ALC) was formed in 1960 with a merger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Norwegian), United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish) and American Lutheran Church (German).

role of women in the church, rather than supporting foreign mission work exclusively (Lagerquist 1987). [99] The influential role the WMF once occupied in raising funds for mission work gradually receded from focus for the ALCW as the American Lutheran Church changed its policy on foreign missions.[100]

The Women's Missionary Federations had encouraged women to make rolled sheet bandages for years, which it sent to overseas Lutheran hospitals and dispensaries. No one I spoke with at IHM, however, explicitly connected the bandage-making projects to the Women's Missionary Federations, perhaps because they were seen as part of a past approach to foreign mission work in the church or even because this connection was assumed as common knowledge. More often than not, the bandages were associated with elderly women bandage makers when a problem arose with their production techniques or with their overwhelming number, as was the case in my interaction with Sheila. In this section, I briefly discuss WMF initiatives to support overseas mission work through handwork projects, as well as the prominent role of handwork in foreign missionaries' efforts to model the "Christian home." But first I describe how the IHM bandage-making projects derive some of their significance from wartime relief efforts in the United States, which were largely spearheaded by women's organizations beginning in the Civil War.

[99] Following a contentious debate over whether women should be permitted to minister the sacraments as ordained pastors, the ALC General Convention voted to approve the ordination of women in 1970, though by a slim margin. The final vote was 560 for the ordination of women, 414 against, and 1 abstention (Lagerquist 1987:154).

[100] In 1927, only ten years after it was established, the NLCA WMF raised $272,063 for the church's mission work (Lagerquist 1987: 77). Lutheran women's societies in the Upper Midwest increasingly adopted the fund-raising methods pioneered in an earlier period by "mite societies" (the name derived from Mark 12:43-44) of New England, encouraging monetary donations through an array of techniques: home mission boxes for spare coins, member dues, craft sales, "Egg Sundays" when farmers could donate the profits of their eggs sold on Easter Sunday to the cause, in memoriam gifts, a "Missionary for a Day" program wherein members could pay a missionary's salary for one day, and varying monthly drives, such as one May fundraiser that asked members to contribute their age in pennies.

Bandage-making has served an important historical role as a "technology of perception" (Mueggler 2005) through which to know and align spaces, persons, and beings otherwise temporally and spatially removed from the self (especially the battlefield and the mission field).[101] During the Civil War as well as both world wars, hand knitting was depicted as a way for women (the presumed and often actual knitters) to have an active role in the war, a pursuit that produced greater quality goods than knitting machines, and a supply source that cushioned military coffers charged with outfitting troops. Although providing woolen socks was often the primary concern during the Civil War, women in independent sewing circles and church aid societies also rolled bandages, knit scarves, and repaired clothing for soldiers under the auspices of the Women's Central Association for the Relief of the Sick and Wounded of the Army and later the U.S. Sanitary Commission (Macdonald 1988: 98; Hill 1985: 36).[102] Hill (1985:36) argues that the Civil War (1861-1865) relief effort, of which handmade bandages were a part, operated as a catalyst for the large-scale organization of women's voluntary groups, which in turn laid the foundation for the post-war expansion of women's missionary societies.

Between 1917 and 1918, the period after the U.S. declared war on Germany and before Germany's surrender, knitting projects for wool socks, mufflers, wristlets, sweaters, and washcloths were part of the government aid effort administered by the

[101] With the exception of an awareness that rolled sheet bandages had long been made among church organizations, this longer history was not discussed by either IHM staff during my time at the organization nor the volunteer project coordinator, who initially found instructions for the knit bandage project on the Internet.

[102] At the 1867 Paris Conference, an early assembly in the formation of national aid (Red Cross) societies, an American delegate named Charles Bowles, drawing from observations of the recent Civil War, suggested that women's organizations should underpin all national aid efforts. Rather than seeing women as skilled organizers, Bowles' remark was built on a view of women as an able and idle workforce, less busy than men, that would require steady supervision from male medical doctors, who formed a *conseil superieur* (Hutchinson 1996:79-84).

American Red Cross for U.S. soldiers fighting overseas.[103] During World War II, the Red Cross encouraged knitters to make stretch bandages for injured soldiers and civilians. Macdonald (1988: 309) relays one woman's account of fashioning stretch bandages for the New York Red Cross that were initially 15-20 feet long, made of 100 percent cotton yarn with a garter stitch, and could be sterilized. Others were specially taught to knit by Red Cross volunteers (Macdonald 1988).

Although it is apparent that knitting has always served many roles simultaneously, American Red Cross campaigns solidified the ideological relationship between patriotism and knitting during both world wars. A *Time* magazine article published on July 21, 1940 even likened the wartime soldier's quick grasp of a gun with his kinswomen's immediate and responsive handling of knitting needles (cited in Becker 2006).[104] The imperial and patriotic qualities of knitting conveyed through this example are borne out more incisively in Becker's quotation of General Dwight Eisenhower, who identified knitting and other relief projects as exemplifying the "friendly hand of this nation, reaching across the sea to sustain its fighting men" (cited in Becker 2006, Eisenhower address to Congress, June 18, 1945). Representations of knitting have not been stable nor uncontested over time, but it is from this wartime milieu that many mid-twentieth century church societies instituted bandage-making projects. Above all else, knitting was

[103] Knitting was constructed by the Red Cross campaign during World War I, and likely perceived by many, as a patriotic act and even a duty; many wartime newspapers regarded knitting for personal fashion or for a non-relief gift as a selfish activity (Becker 2006). The Junior Red Cross formed in 1917 and included opportunities for children to learn how to knit, as well as lessons on how children might enable others (particularly their mothers and grandmothers) to knit more often by not damaging their clothing (which would require mending) and holding the knitter's yarn skein as an assistant. Becker (2006) reports that all knitted products in World War I, to honor the knitters' efforts, were to be treated as "government property" and accounted for by the War Department.

[104] Knitters did construct fingerless mitts that were designed to allow for the adept handling of a weapon in cold weather, thereby in one sense enabling the firing of a soldier's gun overseas (Becker 2006).

construed as an activity that contracted time and space, enabling tactile participation in a war that was taking place elsewhere.

Following World War II, Church World Service, a pan-Christian agency, formed in 1946 to distribute emergency aid for people in seventy countries, especially those living in refugee camps. Making bandages for injured soldiers and civilians was one way for church members, unified in Church World Service across seventeen denominations, to be involved with the relief effort (Macdonald 1988:355; Sack 2000:140). Organized in 1940, the wartime Lutheran aid program began under the direction of Lutheran World Action, an arm of the international Lutheran World Convention (which became the Lutheran World Federation in 1946), and later aligned its efforts with those of Church World Service (Nelson 1980:487).

While war punctuated the production of relief supplies, Christian women's organizations assumed a central role in producing hand-made bandages for medical missionary work prior to World War I, in the interwar years, and following World War II. With the rise of the hospital in the late nineteenth century and changing standards for physician training, Christian medical missions followed domestic medical societies in their provision of medical supplies and technology and in the establishment of overseas institutions (Walls 1996). By World War I, medical missions were "all but universal" components of European and American Christian mission movements (Walls 1996:212). Among American Lutherans, women's organizations frequently supplied bandages to support the work of single women missionaries, who served overseas primarily as teachers or nurses.

One of the longest regular volunteers at IHM was a woman named Harriet who devoted 17 years after retirement to the agency. In 1957, she enjoined American Lutheran church-goers to produce rolled sheet bandages for the Lutheran hospital where she spent 36 years as a nurse in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon from 1954 to 1989. In an article written for the Evangelical Lutheran Church's *Women's Missionary Messenger*, Harriet petitioned women to help supply the hospital with four-inch square gauze surgical sponges for operations (which each used between 40 and 400), toweling, and "bandages made from worn sheets" (June 1957: 33). Harriet's appeal, not unusual for the publication nor among other Lutheran medical missionaries, normalized the reuse of secondhand items belonging to American readers, which even if "worn" and considered no longer suitable as domestic linens could be brought into an overseas medical institution for their reapportionment. Bearing the title "With Our Missionaries," the article cultivated a stake of ownership in the hospital among its readership and in the success of Harriet's work.

The role of handwork and cloth in modeling, instructing, and configuring specific notions of the family, gender relations, productivity, the home, and the body has been well documented in the scholarly literature on mission work (Hill 1985; Schneider 1987:434; Comaroff 1996; Comaroff and Comaroff 1990). [105] In the American Lutheran mission to Madagascar, textile arts, most notably sewing and embroidery, played an integral role in configuring the "Christian home." J.P. Hogstad, the first American Lutheran missionary to southern Madagascar, advised the

[105] Burgess (1932:189-190), writing about the work of American Lutheran women missionaries in southern Madagascar, notes, "The woman missionary's hand is one of healing and sympathy. In the same manner as the Master healed the body before He could minister to the soul, so the missionary nurse gives medicines to the sick and bandages their wounds. She wins their confidence and thus opens the way for the Gospel message."

establishment of what became the Evangelical Lutheran Church's Manafiafy Girls School in 1893 in order to remove Tandroy and Tanosy girls from the "heathen environment" of their natal homes (Johnson 1935). The school began with four pupils and by the end of 1895 taught twenty-five how to embroider, make lace, sew their own clothes, mend, wash clothing, and weave mats and baskets as part of its "home economics" curriculum. A comparable Boys' School was organized in 1897 in Tolagnaro/Ft. Dauphin on the southeast coast and instructed boys how to sew and mend clothing as well as to pursue the agricultural production of sweet potatoes and coffee.

Ladies' aid societies also were established among Malagasy Lutherans and patterned largely after their American counterparts. Writing to the American Lutheran readers of the Women's Missionary Federation *Messenger* in May 1959, Lois described from Tshiombe what may have been a familiar scene: "Most of the ladies do some handwork during their weekly meetings, besides cleaning and spinning cotton for making shawls, embroidering fine luncheon cloths, or weaving baskets. Their hands are busy until time for devotion" (1959:3). Handwork in this passage circumvented the moral pitfalls that could accompany idle hands, shared a relationship with Bible study, and served as a productive activity. Lois tells the reader that the handwork items were sold at an auction and the money helped to pay the salaries of Malagasy teachers, evangelists, and pastors (1959:3). The missionary encounter made explicit the qualities of personhood that textile work served to foster (e.g., productivity and time-thrift), things that often remained implicit for American Lutheran women's organizations pursuing similar projects in the Midwest.

To summarize, the activity of bandage-making has been overlooked as a "technology of perception" (Mueggler 2005) for American Christians, perhaps because of its close association with women's work and the domestic setting. I have pointed out how the bandages occasionally became gendered things in the IHM warehouse and how this association was often made negatively. I suggested in this section, however, that bandage-making has played an important historical role in women's missionary organizations, as well as in American wartime relief. In both cases, bandage-making held the potential, actively constructed by government campaigns, to bring the unseen spaces and activities of the battle field and the mission field into one's immediate environment and simultaneously provide one with an active role in these collective undertakings. In the following section, I examine how bandage-making serves this role for IHM supporters. I discuss how the tactility of the bandage-making process, as well as the visibly evident hand labor of constructed bandages, draws upon a religiously significant ideology of sensory perception that fuses touch with the epistemological reality of "seeing." This ideology pervades not only bandage-making but other manual labor operations in the warehouse, presenting a model for Christian worldly involvement.

A Hands-On Connection: Bandage-Making as a Devotional Practice

One Tuesday afternoon, Dagmar, a dedicated full-time IHM volunteer, read an e-mail correspondence aloud to six of us seated around the lunchroom table. A year earlier, she had met a young male Lutheran pastor at the Southwest Wisconsin Synod meeting and introduced him to the crocheted bandage project as an IHM representative. After learning to crochet, the pastor reported to Dagmar that he had involved others in his congregation in the project. Together they unfurled a long stretch of crocheted cotton

yarn from the organist's stand on the church balcony in order to bless it before it was cut, pinned together, and sent to IHM. In his letter to Dagmar, voiced by her, he explained why he found the project personally rewarding:

> The beauty of this project is that it gives you a hands-on connection with suffering people who are living halfway around the world. It also gives me a chance to pray for them while I work at making the bandages … [and] helping to bandage a wound; I am thankful that God has opened a way for me to connect with a wounded brother or sister.

The man's written account tied the project closely to the embodied experience of suffering and specifically to bodily "wounds," alluding to the fleshly wounds of Christ. In "bandaging a wound," the writer suggested, the material form serves to transform the physical closure of a wound into a spiritual event in the patient's life. Drawing upon a language of spiritual and humanitarian kinship, the pastor indicated the physical healing provided by the bandage was an "opening" presented by God through which he might connect spiritually with a brother or sister overseas. In the pastor's written assessment, the material form of the hand-crafted bandage assembled and mapped connections among the pastor's body, the receiving medical patient's body, and the body of Christ as the kingdom of God.

Bandage-making is a devotional activity for a large number of IHM supporters. The bandages, more than the agency's other two hand-work projects, enable individual supporters to "continue the healing ministry of Jesus," the primary IHM organizational objective. The gospel message of salvation through Jesus Christ constitutes an implicit

part of the bandages' form and function.[106] By definition, bandages aid in the body's healing process, and IHM promotional materials link this process to the equally crucial spiritual healing that bandage recipients might experience through the healing of the body's wounds. In order to effect this process, bandage makers attest to praying while they construct the bandages and to incorporating the bandage recipients into their daily prayers even after their crafts have been presumably sent overseas. The tactile process of bandage-making, however, also associates the activity closely with worship and the expanded capacities of space and time that people access through prayer. In order to show how bandage-making becomes a devotional practice, I first address how the process of bandage-making draws upon the Christian symbolism of the hands and the social construction of the sense of touch.

Among supporters of International Health Mission, the hands exist as an embodied representational device that coalesces and educes several layers of action. Volunteers describe themselves as "instruments" of God's overshadowing influence while promoting their direct participation in a genealogy of "healing hands" that extends from Jesus Christ's earthly healing work to contemporary Lutheran doctors working overseas. Some volunteers draw out the implicit model for personal devotion in the organizational edict; one man, a retired medical laboratory technician, told me his work was a way to "worship with the hands."

The hand's reach and touch beyond the self is an important multimodal sign, or "metasemiotic concept" (Parmentier 1993:360), that forges representational links in Christian practice among knowledge and faith, touch and sight, and presence and biblical

[106] The New Testament Greek verb *sozein* may be glossed as to save, heal, or make well in English, demonstrating the deep-seated connection among these activities in the New Testament (Rakotojoelinandrasana 2002).

past. As an embodied complex sign, the hand contextually anchors a highly elaborated, multi-layered set of Christian discourses on the religious basis of perceiving and acquiring knowledge (cf. Parmentier 1993). Hand representations of differing scale pervade Christian imagery in many forms: for example, the "hand of God" may be taken as a representation of unseen divine involvement in human life (Chidester 2005:52), while the oft-represented "hands at prayer," as in the popular American devotional painting *Grace* by Eric Enstrom (1918), evoke the notions of obedience, human-divine communication, and faith (Morgan 1998:164).

Chidester (2000), building upon work by Levinas (1989), has proposed that the sense of touch in American religious discourse provides an experiential basis and metaphor for the knowledge of contact with an other, whether that being is the divine or another human person. The discourse of social connection through touch appears in several IHM publications, particularly those that elicit donations of money or handwork. One donation envelope strives to make the monetary gift placed within its flaps into something qualitatively different: "Your gift to IHM touches the lives of people in developing countries and brings them toward better health and greater productivity." Another flyer on the AIDS Hospice Kits suggests the prayer-work and monetary donations toward the project extend the boundaries of the giving persons into the lives of others: "Our prayers and generosity can reach far into the lives of those who have been affected [by HIV/AIDS]." An IHM project funding list calls forth the obligation that potential donors may fulfill as "instruments of God's grace" in the world when they contribute to a cause. Tactility, therefore, supplies the phenomenological groundwork for the formation of Christian personhood in hand-work projects, donations, and prayer-work

for aid recipients; to touch and to be touched positions one as both a subject and an object in a hierarchy of religious action.

Studies of religious language have described its ability to situationally evoke the divine through shifts of voice and tense, reported speech, framing language, and other stylistic and formal features (Keane 1997). As socially organized and selective ways of knowing, the senses may be seen as interrelated semiotic forms that hold the potential to bring that which may appear "beyond sense" (Chidester 1992:20) into more complete view. According to Chidester (1992:18,20), the "synesthetic metaphors" of word and light that pervade New Testament accounts of salvation history "intensify perceptual experience" through a kind of imaginative transcendence of ordinary seeing and hearing. Following Chidester (2000), I suggest that the contemporary American evangelical discourse of "touch" builds upon the intersensory phenomenon of synesthesia by portraying touch in one religious sense as a convergence of human tactility and divine sight or omnipresence. The ideology of Christian touch as an epistemological foundation of "seeing" mediates the activity of bandage construction and the social interpretation of the bandage form.[107]

The religious discourse on the sense of touch influences the way IHM supporters approach the bandage-making projects as devotional activities. My aim, however, is to suggest that just as this discourse potentially makes bandage construction a powerful devotional activity, it simultaneously enables bandage-makers to creatively resolve some

[107] My use of the term "ideology" should not be understood to imply false consciousness. The usage builds upon a recent scholarly literature in linguistic anthropology and semiotics on language ideologies and semiotic ideologies. In their signifying practices, people bring to bear morally authoritative and historical notions of how material things operate in the world in relation to people and of how material engagements elicit or determine qualities of a person's moral character. Following Keane's (2007:17) work, "semiotic ideologies" play a productive role in mediating how people perceive the relationship between material things, words, and human agency. In this framework, ideology may be understood as a generative element of, and perhaps a partial awareness for, the unfolding processes of social differentiation.

of the ethical questions and uncertainties that surround medical aid (cf. Feldman 2007). In particular, the tactile process of bandage production pieces together the spatiotemporal divide between aid providers and aid recipients. Since the religious discourse on touch constructs tactility as a way of perceiving and "seeing" beyond the immediately apparent world, the tactile production of a bandage thereby holds the power to enable IHM supporters to envision and materialize the otherwise unseen relationships of the aid exchange. It also links bandage-making intimately with other acts of worship, particularly prayer, that likewise enable believers to merge seen and unseen dimensions of lived experience.

In addition to praying over the unfolding bandage, as the pastor indicated earlier, many bandage-makers indicated they prayed for the bandage recipients and imagined the bandages as extensions of their prayer. The hand-written notes that frequently accompanied the bandages may be seen as part of the bandage-makers' effort to request divine blessing for the aid recipients and to secure the recipients' recognition of the blessing. Hand-written notes often took on the present subjunctive tense (e.g., with a modal verb such as shall or may) of spoken prayer or metanarratively commented upon the act of prayer itself. "May beautiful memories carry you on wings of love to a tomorrow of comfort and peace," wrote one woman. "You are in my thoughts and prayers." Another jotted on South Dakota congregational stationary, "I pray they [bandages] can help the needed persons. God bless." One woman glued her California address to the interior page of a greeting card so the recipient of each bandage could write to her for more. "I want you to know how much I appreciate the opportunity to make these bandages for you," she inscribed. "I hope this brings you some comfort to know

someone cares." Although these bandage makers did not know the identity, geographic locale, or language(s) of the recipients, their writing in English took on the tone of a personal communication and projected a caring relationship between the maker and the recipient, often presumed to be a clinic patient rather than a medical practitioner.

Several characteristics of the bandages indicate they operate as part of divine communications that involve interwoven linguistic and embodied elements of worship. In addition to supplying a medium through which to imagine the social connection with the recipient of the bandage, the making of the bandage, as a form of "worship with the hands," serves to strengthen the crafter's relationship with the divine. The hand-written notes consistently draw attention to the role of the bandage recipients and the bandage-making projects in personal prayers. As in the genre of spoken prayer, specificity in the written notes may be considered a stylistic feature that increases the efficacy of the bandage-makers' prayer (cf. Keane 1997). The bandages provide a material continuation of the vocalized prayers issued by the bandage-makers and thus give a visual quality to prayer.[108] Moreover, the material form may be seen to collect and coalesce the prayers voiced by bandage-makers for the bandage recipients, a series of supplications that potentially still address the recipients in the absence of the bandage makers themselves. Finally, the precise wrapping of the bandages – sometimes in tissue paper – and the hand-written notes, like gift cards, signal their gift status, but the specific words inscribed on the accompanying cards suggest that the gift should be understood ultimately as the result or outcome of faith. (See Figure 6.3)

The hand-written notes placed with the bandages identify them as works of faith, as I described above, rather than good works that help one attain salvation. The

[108] I am grateful to Emanuela Grama for this point.

distinction between works of faith and good works is a foundational Lutheran theological tenet that dates to the Reformation. For Lutherans, the central doctrine of justification through faith in Christ alone stipulates that one cannot be saved by one's efforts, or good works, but that salvation is a gift from God for those willing to accept it. Repentance and faith are the means by which that gift is received. Through the notes and the bandages' packaging, bandage makers communicated the notion that their handwork stemmed ultimately from their faith, which they received as a gift from God. They endeavored to show through the bandage form that this gift, or blessing, was also available to the bandage recipients.

Figure 6.3. A prayer-text that accompanied carefully wrapped knit bandages

Sometimes the exact placement of the hand-written notes further communicated their relationship to the materiality of the bandages. On one occasion, I opened a small box of carefully wrapped knit and crocheted bandages to discover that the bandage-maker

had placed colored slips of paper within the tightly wound rolls of yarn. Each slip of paper, cut to the exact width of the pinned roll, contained a message of salvation on one side and the maker's name and home address on the other. The first slip of paper I examined appeared to include two bars of "Alleluia," cut from the page of a church bulletin. As I pulled the paper fully out of the bandage roll in front of my coworkers Carolyn and her mother Lois, Carolyn picked it up and turned it over to find a prayer (from the same church bulletin) on the opposite side. "Oh, this is what she wants," Carolyn said, referring to the bandage-maker. While "Alleluia" was an important hymn, Carolyn indicated the words on the opposite side – a "prayer of confession" as she identified it – were more significant, more the intent of the bandage-maker, for reaching out to non-believers. To confess and repent for sins would be a key step in accepting Christ as personal savior.

The bandage-maker had quite literally woven the Word of God into the fabric of the bandage itself, making the words appear as the bandage was unrolled to place on one's body. Barely perceptible in the thick folds of cotton yarn, the colored pieces of paper included the following passages: a typed Philippians 1:3-5; the prayer of confession; "I am the good shepherd" in hand-written blue ink; a typed Psalm 145; and a typed Psalm 33. In some ways the words were protected inside the bandage roll, placed there as if they were the bone and marrow upon which the bandage would eventually fit. The slightly camouflaged nature of the paper "filling" suggested the words had an appropriate time of being revealed and should remain covered until then.

By attaching written notes to the coiled bundles of fabric, bandage makers demonstrated an implicit concern over the ability of the material form alone to carry and

convey their personal identity, sentiment, and intent. When one bandage-maker placed words inside the cloth form, she highlighted the text-like qualities of the bandage and the way the Word may be seen to emanate from within the material husk of the bandage or body, as an ultimate, more immaterial "meaning." Perhaps less overtly, she simultaneously showed the interdependence of these two mediums: the words placed inside the coils of fabric required the materiality of the cloth for their placement and concealment. At the same time, the hoped-for blessing of the material form's healing function might not take place without the explicit guidance of the words on paper.

The ritual use of cloth in revealing sacred text or in ritually binding it to religious practitioners is not unique to Lutheran believers. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1982) suggests in Western Ashkenazic tradition it is the Torah binder, a piece of unbleached linen made from a cloth used during the ceremony of circumcision, that ritually ties the covenant of Moses (in giving the Torah) to the patrilineal covenant of Abraham (manifest in circumcision). Adorned with dense iconography and textual inscription, the long binder serves as a ritual object that spatializes the temporal passage occurring in a male child's lifetime and ties this life to the sacred text. What distinguishes hand-made bandages as ritual forms from the Torah binder is that they comprise generative elements of worship not incorporated in the Lutheran liturgy. While Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1982) ties the materiality of the Torah binder to the perpetuation of the Jewish patriline, bandages seek to expand the scope of Christian kinship through the healing process. Like the Torah binder, the bandages share a deep interrelationship with the sacred text, implicating the gospel story of salvation through their intended healing function.

My research shows in part how the bandages' materiality sometimes requires the authority of the written word to secure the evangelistic potential of its form, extending Keane's (2007) observations of a Protestant semiotic ideology that demarcates words and things. In this process, bandage-makers indicated they privileged certain functions of language over others. Their hand-written notes drew less attention to the inscribed words as referential forms than to the performative function of language. The tense and metapragmatic content of the notes suggested they were extensions of prayer, interrelated with the language used in making supplications. One note from a church auxiliary group that accompanied a box of knit bandages succinctly said: "No Response Necessary. Our Prayers go with this group of bandages." Prayer sufficed as a far-reaching, boundary-less, and all-embracing genre of communication.

Bandages became text-like in two possible senses, then: in one sense, their function may be seen as an active fulfillment of the gospel of salvation, or divine Word. They also shared an interrelationship with prayer-texts that attempted to secure the divine agency required to fulfill future action. Finally, the bandages could transform the healing of the body's flesh into a blessing or sign of the Word. In the following section, I shift my focus from the divine communications implicated in the bandage form and the bandage-making process to examine how bandages were circulated, interpreted, and debated in conversations that took place among the warehouse volunteers. Volunteer workers recognized the bandages socially as extensions of the bandage-makers' personhood and prayer-work. Yet tensions arose among volunteers between, on the one hand, acknowledging the bandages' person-like qualities and, on the other hand, evaluating their usefulness for overseas medical practitioners.

Moral Evaluations of Productivity and Personhood

Although it was easy to see that the IHM bandages were handmade and difficult to erase the signs of hand labor from their surface, the agency supported an effort whereby the noticeable appearance of striving for - but not completely attaining – the uniformity of machine production could become a valued sign of the bandage-maker's skill and commitment to the IHM mission. Beyond being a piece of handwork in the most obvious sense, the bandages foreground the hands as synecdoche for the person. Individual bandages, each displaying telltale signs of hand construction, build an awareness in the viewer of the moral-physical *effort* involved with generating the appearance of machine production, and its standard of uniformity, through hand labor. In this sense, among warehouse volunteers, the bandages' fibrous contours could provide a potent indicator of the bandage-makers' success in disciplining their bodies in religious labor. The stitching that differentiated knitting and crocheting might escape notice by the untrained eye, but the carefully hatched, slightly uneven loops of yarn on the tropical ulcer bandages distinguish each object as unique upon close inspection.

International Health Mission relied almost exclusively on volunteers to sustain its operation and its staff prized the role IHM's work played in people's daily prayer and devotions. But finer distinctions concerning "productivity" and personhood occurred in the flow of goods and conversation among volunteers. I would like to suggest that work wasn't automatically presumed to be a social good but could better be seen as part of a complex effort to secure and discern divine will for oneself and for others. In this effort, the kind of work people performed, its timing, specific qualities, and circulating information from human and divine sources all came under scrutiny in debating and discussing its value. The

social personhood of bandage-makers and volunteers was tied to these varied material qualities, forms, and sources of evaluation. It could be altered or perhaps even overturned with the continually shifting knowledge of God's plan.

Catherine, a widowed pensioner with five adult children, was regarded as the agency's expert on rolling sheet bandages. The volunteer coordinator Dagmar regularly gave Catherine plastic bags of sheet bandages to inspect and fix at home with her rolling spindle, scissors and tape. Dagmar held Catherine's bandages, placed in sealed boxes, tightly bound together, of uniform circumference, and sharply cut, as a model for others to follow. Catherine's bandages, Dagmar told us, were to be accepted without inspection and sent in overseas shipments, but all other boxes of bandage parcels had to be opened and their contents examined.

Catherine lived in a small one-bedroom apartment in a northern suburb of St. Paul where she moved to be closer to a son and his family after selling the family house in which she and her husband raised their children. As an avid sports fan, she rolled bandages and cut the sheet cloth while sitting in her living room chair and watching the Minnesota Twins play baseball on television. Catherine wound the bandages together on a hand-crafted wooden spindle, which had been made for her by Dagmar's husband and served initially as the agency's prototype for the labor-saving apparatus in photographs and promotional materials. (See Figure 6.4) If the Twins were winning, her spinning pace was high, but if they were losing, she would often say jokingly, she wasn't nearly as productive.

Figure 6.4. A bandage-rolling machine, made of scrap wood and clothes hanger wire, for making rolled sheet bandages

In explaining why she “didn’t mind” making the bandages, Catherine repeated to me on several occasions that she lived alone. She associated bandage production, something that “[kept her] busy” and had become “second nature” for her, with the absence of her children and husband in her immediate home. When I brought a box of bandages for repair to Catherine one morning and spoke with her in the dusty warehouse aisle, she indirectly established her commitment to the project through numbers. “People ask me how many bandages I’ve rolled since I started,” Catherine reported. “I tell them I have no idea!” Catherine paused and continued, “It really doesn’t matter. I don’t keep track ... I don’t mind doing it. The truth is I’ve probably made thousands.” Catherine linked the temporal duration of her bandage-making contributions to the warehouse space enveloping us. People ask me how long I’ve rolled, she repeated, but I tell them this isn’t important. “Ya know, I’ve been rolling since before this warehouse.” Catherine gestured to the ceiling-high metal shelving surrounding us as we talked. In a socially appropriate manner, she projected self-effacement through a sequence of reported questions and answers that verbally nested denials of the importance of her work in our conversation.

Catherine laid the ground necessary to stipulate subsequently that she has rolled thousands of bandages since at least 1995 when IHM purchased the warehouse building.

As is evident from Catherine's point of view and others I knew, "productivity" formed a salient moral standard by which people assessed themselves and their coworkers. One's relative "productivity" was perceived to fluctuate from day to day and formed the basis for moral self-critique, discussion, observation, and approving compliments to others. What made productivity an especially important, evolving moral indicator of personhood was the belief that it conveyed critical qualities of Christian virtue in unspoken terms, such as the stewardship of time and a strong work ethic. My coworkers commented rarely upon their own work ethic or productivity to others approvingly, for this could be seen as boastful and, even worse, prideful. Some gently chided Catherine's animated conversations and boisterous laughter by noting disapprovingly out of earshot that she "likes to talk," with talk seen in opposition to productive work and modest self-presentation. Even though Catherine asserted her bandage-making acumen in indirect language, she was unusual in her willingness to openly discuss her productivity rather than let the products and the evidence of completed tasks speak for themselves. The censure of favorable self-referential talk fostered a heightened visual acuity for observing signs of personal enterprise in the material surround.

In my first weeks at IHM, it was difficult *not* to notice all of the ways in which the operation emphasized productive efficiency through the regimentation of work time. Shifts had a prescheduled beginning time that was strictly followed by volunteers, and most set their own end time that they stuck to week after week, to the point of explaining

in advance to their coworkers that they might need to leave early on the following day. The IHM staff did not monitor individual work schedules, but fellow volunteers made it apparent to each other that there was a moral standard of timeliness and deviation from the standard could be noticed. If coworkers did not arrive at the usual time, people would call their home phone to see where they were or subtly let them know upon arrival that they were "missed" earlier in the day. When I arrived five minutes late for my regular volunteer shift one Tuesday morning, Lois reminded me that the work shift started promptly at 9 a.m. and no later. Each work shift included two "break" times, one for coffee (10:30 a.m.) and one for lunch (12:30 a.m.). Setting its social activity qualitatively off from the work of the other warehouse spaces, the coffee break in the IHM conference room was referred to as "coffee time" by the volunteers. If the IHM operations manager Mark had not made his usual announcement of the break time over the warehouse loudspeaker system, the volunteers would not leave their posts and continued working until someone investigated why the announcement had been delayed.

IHM extended the moral ideals of efficiency, time-thrift, and consistent productivity to its satellite workforce by instituting "quality control" guidelines for the bandage-making projects on its Web site and through distributed pamphlets. The bandage-making guidelines presupposed a causal link between the ideal standard form of the bandages and their utility for the medical establishment. With both rolled sheet bandages and knit or crocheted tropical ulcer bandages, supporters obtained methods for simulating mass-production techniques that might increase efficiency and consistency in their home workshops.

For tropical ulcer bandages, these methods included consistency in the stitching pattern and strict adherence to the yarn blend and type (white or non-dyed cotton yarn), the size of the needles or crochet hook, and the final bandage length of four feet. Once the bandages had been completed, they were to be washed, dried, and individually bound together with a large safety pin. For rolled sheet bandages, the instructions for standard form involved pre-washing the cotton bedsheet material, cutting it into two-to-four-inch-wide strips, sewing the ends together, winding the strips into bundled rolls with a one-to-two-inch diameter, and adhering the rolls together with masking tape. One IHM brochure diagrammed how to construct a "bandage-rolling machine" from scrap wood and clothes hanger wire, such as the one Catherine used, which could "help volunteers prepare rolled [sheet] bandages in a more efficient manner."[109]

In this social milieu, I gradually noticed that numerical figures played an important role in communicating the unseen effort and efficiency of individual IHM supporters who did not work in the warehouse but sent bandages to the agency on a regular basis. Satellite bandage-makers marked their crafts consistently with precise calculations of their productivity. Delivered to the warehouse on October 11, 2005 in a cardboard parcel, one box of knit bandages contained a note written on stationary framed with sketched grapes and the printed words of Psalm 33:5: "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." The message inscribed in black ink directly below specified that a St. Paul Lutheran women's group "ha[d] made 45 Tropical Rolled Bandages – Knitted or Crocheted. Rolled Bandages from sheets are 1262 since Sept. 1st." [Underlining in original] The fine accounting, not unusual for bandage makers, rendered in numbers the

[109] The volunteer coordinator Ana told me she also encouraged people to use a pencil as a makeshift bandage-roller. She wanted them to know, she explained, that there was no special financial investment necessary to start the project.

magnitude of the makers' gift as well as the size of their moral community of interlocutors. The numbers lent a spatial and visual quality to the global communion, or biblical "multitudes." One IHM brochure specifically named this biblical community as the recipient of Lutheran medical aid efforts. The brochure stated that one organizational objective is to "bring the healing hand of Christ to more of the multitudes who suffer from diseases." Each counted bandage could therefore reference a person in the world whose soul may be "touched" by its healing potential.

On another occasion, the vast quantity included in one, multi-carton rolled sheet bandage shipment, notated in multiple places on the cardboard surfaces, prompted Lois to question the efficaciousness of the project. Arriving on Valentine's Day in 2006 from a single church group in southwest Minnesota, the shipment cartons had been painstakingly decorated with colorful holiday stickers and black marker-inscribed prayer phrases in cursive handwriting (e.g., "Praise the Lord!"). The exterior markings revealed that the boxes before us were the latest installment from a group that had thus far produced more than 24,000 sheet bandages.

When another volunteer named Marta and I motioned Lois to the stack of bulky cartons in the warehouse's sorting room when they arrived, Lois repeated the total aloud and hesitantly asked whether "that many rolled bandages" would be needed abroad. Lois' son-in-law, a medical doctor in a Tanzanian Lutheran hospital, had conveyed to her that he needed fewer rolled bandages and more of the agency's AIDS Hospice Kits, assembled sets for advanced AIDS patients that included a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, a pair of gloves, bath towel, and a devotional booklet. As Lois left the room and moved into the hallway, Marta, a former short-term missionary teacher in Cameroon, appeared

concerned that there existed a surplus of rolled sheet bandages. “We don’t want to discourage people,” Marta said, “but then when you hear Lois say something like that, you wonder how things like this will be received overseas.” At the word “this,” Marta gestured to the sticker-covered surface of one box. She appeared distraught by a newfound incongruence between its cheery embellishment and the appropriateness of the effort. When Lois questioned whether the bandages were “needed,” she brought forward a moral and ethical problem. As I described in the previous chapter, the social construction of need connects the individual believer to a wider Christian social landscape. Lois therefore cast into relief a potential lack of conformity between the bandage makers’ voluminous production and Godly direction.

By design, the bandage-making projects strive to be both mediums of personal involvement for American supporters of overseas Lutheran health care and standardized objects for biomedical treatment. The uneasy fit of these two objectives in practice resulted in several dilemmas for International Health Mission. The agency needed to display proper regard and value for its supporters and their products. At the same time, the organizational mission required the staff to follow the communicated and requested “needs,” formally specified on a medical supply order form prior to each shipment, of their “partner clinics” overseas. At the September 2005 monthly volunteer meeting, Dagmar announced that several medical practitioners working overseas had recently expressed dissatisfaction with the condition and quality of the rolled sheet bandages transported in IHM sea container shipments (in discrete parcels and as space-saving packing material for other medical instruments). They no longer wished to receive the rolled sheet bandages unless the quality improved.

The sheet bandages had begun to appear at IHM sometimes in poor condition: composed of the seam of a sheet, fastened with an adhesive that might melt or stick to the sheet in high temperatures, or loosely rolled with innumerable threads pulling the cloth apart. In response to this problem, Dagmar published the "quality control" guidelines for rolled sheet bandages in the November-December 2005 IHM newsletter. In her written article, she carefully acknowledged the "much love rolled into each bandage" by supporters. She used reported speech to characterize the authority and seriousness of the medical practitioners' concern, quoting their admonition "not to send [the bandages] if they are not good quality." In addition, she reiterated the "standards" that the bandages must meet, referenced a photograph of "properly prepared bandages," and closed by affirming God's blessing upon readers for their donations. Among fellow warehouse volunteers, she later advanced her hunch, surmised from the frayed strands of the bandages, that Sunday school and church group teachers had adopted the project for children learning the value of service, but had not adequately supervised the children's output. In both the newsletter and during volunteer meetings, Dagmar emphasized that it was not the *usefulness* of the bandages in question (a moral problem), but rather the methods of their production had in some cases been faulty (Fieldnotes, 6 September 2005).

Within the warehouse, however, volunteer workers expressed some difficulty in separating the faulty bandages from their producers and in presuming these bandages were stripped of their value for the agency. The durable inseparability of the handmade bandages that arrived at the warehouse and qualities of their frequently unseen makers' personhood was perhaps best evidenced in the disposal or reapportionment of *improperly*

prepared bandages. Volunteers in the warehouse who unpacked the bandage parcels that arrived there, myself included, were trained to inspect their contents and weed out worn sheet bandages as well as those comprised of inappropriate fibers, such as wool yarn blends or synthetic sheet fabrics.

The correct method of discarding these bandages was a source of debate. Some thought it unsuitable to throw them away in the garbage, for this would waste the effort and care taken to produce them, and endeavored to find alternative uses (e.g., orthopedic cast padding, cleaning rags) for the bandages to prolong their social life. Others expressed moral reservations about personally knowing the bandages had been thrown away while the bandage makers believed their items had been sent abroad and possibly continued to pray for their safe journey and usefulness. After we unpacked a shoebox of overly worn, frayed sheet bandages, Lois told me she didn't want other warehouse volunteers to see us throwing away the bandages. She worried they might report their observations to fellow congregants and other IHM supporters, thus leading them in her estimation to conclude that the agency did not value their contributions.

In their concerns over how to handle and dispose of handmade bandages, my coworkers suggested they became aware of the bandages' person-like qualities. They tacitly highlighted the interrelationship between the bandage as a freely circulating object and the bandage as a coalesced, yet still changing, instantiation of the bandage-maker's personhood, physical effort, and prayer-work. Even if their effort had technically been misdirected to unsuitable materials or production techniques, the physical presence of the bandages made it difficult to deny the work poured into their construction. Finding a *use* for the bandages recognized an implicit moral covenant between the warehouse volunteer

and the bandage maker through their produced goods, even if the precise terms of this moral covenant were the subject of debate and disagreement. My coworkers further implied that how they cared for the bandages – and specifically whether or not they placed them in the devalued social category of trash, which would ultimately remove the potential of their form constructed in prayer – directly configured the value of bandage-making persons and their labor. They thus endeavored to control the possible interpretations of bandage dispersal activities by in one case hiding their disposal from observing eyes.

Conclusion

For the people I knew who made bandages, knitting, crocheting and rolling fabric comprised ineluctably social practices done for and with others, whether or not those persons were physically present at the time. Catherine was diagnosed with the early stages of Alzheimer's disease toward the end of my fieldwork, and people speculated whether we would see her at the warehouse again. With Dagmar supplying the news that Catherine's children had suggested she move to an assisted-living facility, the volunteers discussed how this would affect Catherine's well-being. She had gradually become accustomed to living in her own apartment and may also no longer have the mobility furnished by driving her car. After sharing Catherine's diagnosis with me, Dagmar vowed that if Catherine was moved to a nursing facility, we had to deliver bandages for her to fix and other things for her to do. (Lois repeated this statement to me on the phone four days later, attributing it to Dagmar.) From Dagmar's perspective, the work she planned to impart to Catherine was not as much for the benefit of International Health Mission as it was for Catherine's well-being and happiness. Dagmar reinforced her caring

relationship with Catherine through the bandage repair projects: she suggested that Catherine needed the tasks in order to successfully make it through the difficult transition of leaving behind her apartment. Being "productive" and showing signs of one's productivity, therefore, sustained the personhood of the bandage-makers, as well as their immediate social relations.

This chapter has argued implicitly that a key approach to understanding the dynamics of contemporary Lutheran aid entails looking "from within" the longstanding representational devices through which supporters come to experience the world (cf. Riles 2000). Why are certain forms so successful as representational devices over others? Bandages in particular "bundle together" (Keane 2003:421) socially produced material qualities that may be taken as inherent to their materiality. The form of the bandage itself and the act of bandage construction bring attention reflexively (or metasemiotically) to the process of drawing together multiple, coexistent relations and spaces of action. At International Health Mission, the bandages came into possibility through the religious language, texts, relations, and conversations that accompanied them and arose with their unfolding qualities.

We can see that in the process of their preparation handcrafted bandages take on both text-like qualities, sharing an interdiscursive relationship with the genre of prayer, and person-like attributes, with the perceptibly indexed hands of their construction signifying (as a potential icon) valued qualities of personhood. The devotional acts that surround and arise from hand-made bandages endeavor to convert the material shape into a blessing in the recipient's life, changing a blessed thing into a transformative life experience. Furthermore, the process of creating the bandages may be seen as a work of

weaving together and materializing the spatial relationship of the aid exchange. In the absence of direct physical contact with medical patients, the possibly suffering body of the imagined recipients, pieced together through the materiality of the bandages, becomes a dominant representational interface through which bandage makers come to know the aid recipients. The problem of this representational device is that it renders largely invisible and distant the receiving person and the socio-cultural relationships of which he or she is a part. In this sense, the bandage projects permit craftspeople to hold the bandage recipients at arms' length, maintaining the ideal of a giving relationship without becoming mired in the complexity of the recipients' lives.

In her research on the institutional practices of United Nations conference negotiations, Riles (2000: 78-82) observed parallels in how Fijian delegates to the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 made use of UN documents and woven mats. "Like mats in Fijian ceremonial life," Riles (2000: 73) notes, "the document provided the concrete form in which collectivities (whether groups of persons, clans, or organizations) were 'taken to' another environment." Riles suggests both documents and handwoven mats replicate a series of nonrepresentational patterns within and among their discrete forms. The aesthetic qualities and labor of patterning, in Riles' analysis, bring to life a recognition of "a reality of levels and levels of reality" (73). The "local" and "global" spheres may be seen as products *of* the UN document's "aesthetic devices," becoming visible inside its related forms (90).

Among American Christian foreign missionaries, the integration of seemingly disparate spaces and populations into an interwoven, socially represented "world" has long been a central, if implicit, concern. For foreign missionaries, this representational

practice makes their largely unseen work known and inhabitable to non-missionaries and garners financial and spiritual support for the missionary endeavor. The people I knew at the IHM warehouse would not have used the terms “local” and “global” in describing their work nor the hand-work projects they inspected and sent overseas. Nonetheless, the bandages encapsulated within their folds a concern with the scales of action. Following Riles, the replicability of patterning in the work of knitting and crocheting and, at a broader level, in bandage rolling may be seen as part of the material process that facilitates the awareness of continuity between seen and unseen dimensions of lived experience.

At the same time, one cannot underestimate the convergence in bandage-making of certain organizing “metasemiotic” forms like the “hands” and “touch” that interlink the biblical text and the human body. These concepts open the way for the multilayered patterning of labor, form, and function in the production and dispersal of bandages. The religious mediation of sensory relations underwrites the activity of making handmade bandages and its historical role in linking American congregants with Protestant foreign missionaries, the spaces of their work, and the communication forms (e.g., letters, oral reports while on leave from the mission field) that missionaries used to bring those spaces to life in the United States.

In closing, I would like to relay one conversation I had with Lynn after I noticed that Malagasy Partnership did not send handmade bandages in its overseas shipments. When I asked him about IHM’s bandage-making projects, Lynn told me he vows *not* to send rolled sheet bandages to SALFA in Madagascar. For at least three years in the mid-1980s, Malagasy Partnership received parcels of rolled bandages from churches in the

Upper Midwest, which were sent to SALFA, until one day when Lynn received a correspondence from Clément. “Could you please stop tearing up the sheets?” Lynn reported to me in “polite” translated English. “We need them for our hospital beds.” For him, the narrated story brought an awareness of the obligation SALFA representatives felt to accept donated goods and signified the importance of continually questioning his perception of “need” and “use,” even after a 25-year partnership with SALFA.

CONCLUSION:
MAKING AND UNMAKING MISSIONARIES

Summary of Findings

At the beginning of this dissertation, I posed two questions: How do missionaries account for and use history in their everyday practices and how do these practices inform their unfolding personhood and social relations? What role do these visions of the past and other representational practices have in cultivating new forms of American Lutheran worldly engagement? In conclusion, I would like to return to these questions and review some of the findings of the dissertation. The sum of all these parts is the argument that missionary personhood is multi-positional and interconnected to the moral imagining of the church in the world. Some scholarship portrays Christian missionaries as individualistic agents or embodiments of religious doctrine. My evidence, however, points to the contrary: American Lutheran missionaries understand themselves and their person through the constantly changing institutions and social relations through which they come into being. Missionaries use their remembrances and historical investigations to bring moral continuity to their personhood, but these activities exist in a dialectical relationship with their contemporary aid exchanges in Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Through the dissertation, I progressively argued for the central role of exchange in the construction of a flexible and dynamic Lutheran moral personhood. Although Lutherans in Minneapolis now send “things” rather than “persons” overseas, I showed through the last two chapters of the dissertation that aid workers continue to make these

things into person-like forms that resemble human missionaries. Aid workers use these person-like things to imagine their relationship with Lutherans in Madagascar and elsewhere, constructing the Christian social world and divine agency, but encounter interpretive dilemmas in trying to make these things speak on their behalf as human missionaries once did. Examining how Lutherans in the Midwest are making and unmaking missionaries, I have argued, offers us a window onto the wider political and social issues at stake in the restructuring of Lutheran worldly involvement.

Through the first four chapters of the dissertation, I analyzed how American Lutheran missionaries construct themselves as historical actors, continually revisiting and reorienting their work in Madagascar as well as their earlier selves. I showed that this process takes place in Minneapolis/St. Paul in relation to shifting sources of information, narratives, former colleagues, material things, kin, important religious figures, remembered and unseen interlocutors, house spaces, and institutions that become inseparable from the missionaries' personhood as it is now understood. American Lutheran missionary personhood is perpetually changing in relation to the process of remembering through written memoirs, circulating material things, domestic spaces in southern Madagascar and Minnesota, and Lutheran institutions and movements on three continents.

Retired American Lutheran missionaries to Madagascar constitute the last generation of foreign missionaries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In memoirs and other written histories, they position their current situation of "displacement" from Madagascar in a series of transcontinental migrations, beginning with that of Norwegian *husmenn* or cotters in the late nineteenth century. This origin

story relates the lifelong missionaries' current circumstances, having recently left Madagascar after spending more than 20 years there, to a process of uprooting and moving that holds spiritual and theological significance. Missionaries actively construct their lives as moral tales that exemplify the importance of being obedient and following God's calling in the world wherever it might lead. They position themselves in these stories as prototypic Protestant pilgrims. This narrative shares a relationship with the Lutheran doctrine of two kingdoms, or having "one foot in God's Word and one in God's world." For missionaries, their families, and supporters in the Twin Cities, these narratives reinforce Norwegian ethnicity as a unifying force of mission work, while largely downplaying the political, economic, and religious conflicts that underlie missionaries' transnational migrations from Norway to the Midwest, Norway to Madagascar, and Madagascar to the Midwest. My research highlights the importance of certain regional relationships in underpinning the "religious globalization" of Christianity (Keane 2007). Further study could illuminate how believers in other world regions understand the global ecumene through the places that underpin histories of missionary evangelism and migration.

The collection of stories that I analyzed in Chapter 1 locates Lutheran believers in a specific moral geography of place-relations with theological and familial significance. As long-circulated and socially dominant narratives set forth at collective events like the 2005 missionary reunion, however, these place-setting narratives draw their efficacy from the authority of the written word in Lutheranism. Since they reference or entextualize other written sources (e.g., the Bible, the writings of Martin Luther, written accounts of the Malagasy martyrs), they self-reflexively heighten the authority given to the written

medium and to reading as a practice of self-betterment and self-understanding. Beginning with Chapter 2, I tried to broaden and complicate some of the elements of the stories that I relayed in the first chapter: missionaries do form abiding and strong connections to the place and people of southern Madagascar. They also circulate material things among themselves in Minneapolis/St. Paul, such as the silver bracelets, that have largely been recontextualized as signs of faith and more general markers of missionary involvement in southern Madagascar. By analyzing the stories and claims that surround the bracelets, I suggested that they had to be examined in relation to the social history of southern Madagascar, the histories of their acquisition, and the theological principles that animated relationships between early American Lutheran missionaries and Tanosy and Tandroy Malagasy. These forgotten or erased histories have faded from view for many missionaries in Minnesota; the bracelets have become allegorical forms of faith that signal through their constant bodily wear that they cannot easily be removed from one's person.

In Chapter 3, I argued that elder missionaries come into being as historical actors through kinship relations that take place in remembered domestic spaces of southern Madagascar. Houses and house spaces share an interrelationship with the personhood of these elders for the adult missionary children with whom I traveled to Madagascar. Acts of remembering former house spaces reveal certain tensions of kinship that missionaries experience between the missionary calling and their relationships with their children, as well as with Malagasy Lutheran relations in the surrounding community. I pointed out that narrative remembrances of food and eating in domestic spaces are not merely backward-looking, but continue to configure the missionaries as Norwegian-American

and American persons in relation to their Malagasy interlocutors. Yet they also raise a series of moral questions for many former missionaries that linger in Minneapolis/St. Paul and probe deeper issues about what it is to be obligated to their Malagasy neighbors and fellow Lutherans. These acts of remembering take place in the current domestic spaces of missionaries in Minneapolis, where home displays bring together Norway and Madagascar into a single spatial and visual field that missionaries inhabit on a daily basis. Retired missionaries continue to teach through their Malagasy keepsakes, using them as didactic tools and thereby fulfilling their lifelong commitment to the missionary vocation.

Chapter 4 examined how missionaries are not simply institutional representatives but use time to refashion their religious identity in relation to the changing institutions that sponsored and supported them: the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM) and American Lutheran churches (ALC/ELCA). By telling *fifohazana* accounts, some missionaries like Hank – now a member of the charismatic Lutheran Renewal movement – place themselves as historical actors in the *fifohazana* movement, emphasizing their role in a vibrant Malagasy revival with national prominence rather than a regional mission church. Stories of the *fifohazana* more subtly use missionary involvement in the revival to respond to and circumvent political problems in the ALC/ELCA, which associate missionaries with an outdated and imperialist approach to worldly involvement. But perhaps even more importantly for the discussion at hand, Hank told me that his Lutheranism changed over the duration of his mission work in Madagascar, in response to his increasing immersion in local congregations and his desire to learn more about the *fifohazana*. Retired missionaries in the Twin Cities continue to reshape their personhood in relation to their changing remembrances of the Lutherans and Lutheran practices they

knew in southern Madagascar. Mission work, as I pointed out in the Introduction, is a process of mutual entanglement: American Lutheran missionaries left Madagascar with changed and changing practices of faith that continue to unfold through their current social relations in Minneapolis/St. Paul.

My research found that American Lutherans and Malagasy Lutherans are engaged in a process of socializing biblical models of personal relationships, such as that of "accompaniment" from Luke 24, into new religious institutions. Two recently established medical aid organizations in Minneapolis provide biomedical relief to Madagascar and other former sites of American Lutheran evangelism, thereby "accompanying" Malagasy Lutherans in medical mission work. While shifting interdependencies among NGOs, nation-states, and other political actors have amplified the role of NGOs in providing basic services in many world regions, the institutions loosely affiliated as non-governmental organizations in anthropological literature have widely divergent histories, aims, and organizational structures that shape how they may be studied and what conclusions may be drawn from them (Fischer 1997). Non-governmental organizations often have been characterized as predominantly *new* forms of transnational social organization, networks, and governance that resulted from increased international funds for development. Contrary to this depiction, my research indicated the ties among southern Madagascar and the Midwest United States were not new but had been formed through more than a century of American missionary evangelism on the island (1888-present) and the mid-twentieth-century establishment of Lutheran biomedical institutions in southeast (Manambaro) and southwest (Ejeda) Madagascar.

Non-governmental organizations have been portrayed as collective actors that operate in frequently unseen geopolitical spaces, such as "transnational flows" and "networks" (Fisher 1997). Yet non-governmental organizations also sustain social movements, carrying with them representational practices long rooted in particular times and places. In the case of the American Lutheran foreign mission movement, non-governmental organizations today play a substantial role in sustaining its practices. Non-governmental organizations operate within longer, complex histories of charity, philanthropy, evangelism, and colonialism from which they cannot be disentangled (Gupta 1998, Malkki 1996). These histories pervade the "humanitarian representational practices" that form the basis for contemporary non-governmental services, networks, and ideologies (Malkki 1996:389). My research with IHM and Malagasy Partnership supports this point ethnographically. For example, even as they seek to distinguish themselves from previous aid efforts, Malagasy Partnership and IHM both use and draw upon the religious language of worldly "need," an important and longstanding trope in missionary writing that enables believers to locate themselves in a wider Christian social landscape.

While many humanitarian agencies pursue work against a presumed background of moral universalism, scholars point out that non-governmental organizations actively construct and sustain these visions of a single global morality (Butt 2002; Boltanski 1999; Rorty 1993). Through their representational practices, NGOs thus position their supporters within specific worldviews and engender moral narratives of human difference, suffering, and the relationship of "local" and "global" spheres of action (Redfield 2006, Riles 2000). Drawing upon my research with volunteers at International

Health Mission, I argued that IHM supporters represent the global ecumene through the activity of making bandages, bringing the otherwise unknown recipients of the bandages into personal prayers and into the tactile bandage-making process.

Throughout the dissertation, I have been analyzing the everyday moral practices of former missionaries and fellow Lutherans in Minneapolis as two intertwined, yet distinctive, processes of exchange: 1) semiotic exchanges with unfolding, historically situated, and varied interpretive evaluations of sign-relations, and 2) exchanges of person-like material things that involve many exchange partners simultaneously (e.g., the divine, Malagasy Lutheran medical practitioners, former interlocutors) and that construct social relations through the process of their circulation, handling, and giving away. In a final section, I wish to return to these two forms of exchange and consider one contribution of this dissertation to the anthropology of Christianity. I will first provide a brief vignette from my fieldwork that will underscore some of my final points.

Being Called and Sent: Exchange as a Practice of Christian Social Relations

On a Thursday evening in early February 2006, Lynn focused the group prayer session at Malagasy Partnership on the impending departure of Robin, a regular volunteer who would be a short-term missionary in India, and offered an informal "commissioning" ceremony for her in the NGO's office. Robin, a college student at a nearby Christian university, would be leaving in one week for northern India, where she planned to work for six months as a missionary teacher in a Christian school for pre-teen and teenage girls. Prior to the prayer session, Robin mentioned in conversation that she had received the prayer and blessings of her church, describing a "commissioning ceremony" that she took part in the previous week. Lynn responded, "That's [the commissioning is] the

difference between being called and going. It's good to go somewhere, but it's best to be called there and to have an understanding of that. Being called is special." In previous conversations, Lynn had described Malagasy Partnership as a "sending agency," blurring the boundaries between it as a place that dispatches medical materials and a place that sends forth human missionaries. On this evening, Lynn drew upon the combined symbolic efficacy of both projects.

We moved into the NGO office at Lynn's invitation following a 90-minute work session, which had involved unpacking and sorting jumbled bags of needles, intravenous catheters, prep swabs, surgical blades, and sterile dressings. As Robin walked into the office, Lynn ceremonially placed a sheet cake on the table in front of her. On its white frosting, dotted with multicolored sprinkles, were the words, "Robin, Soava dia." Robin read the phrase aloud, pausing with the words partially formed in her mouth and then asked Lynn what they meant. "Bon voyage or good trip," Lynn translated. I was intrigued to see that Robin's cake, like the one I received at a farewell celebration before my trip to Madagascar in November 2005, featured the same Malagasy phrase. The language brought the country of Madagascar and the movement of medical materials and people there metonymically into the celebration for Robin's departure to India.

In our farewell celebration for Robin, we simultaneously marked Lynn's travel to Madagascar as a missionary in the late 1970s. When Robin sat down at the table, Lynn revealed a small, carved wooden statuette that he held covered in the palm of his hand. He slowly placed the piece on the round table in front of Robin with the rest of the volunteers listening from a semi-circle of chairs. Lynn explained that a "wise woman" had told him and his wife Julie before they left for Madagascar, "The safest place to be is

always in God's hands." The small-scale statuette with dark varnish in front of us provided a visual elaboration of Lynn's point. The piece featured a cupped hand with the forearm resting in a wooden base, cradling a miniature carved baby in the hand's palm. The tips of the hand's fingers bent protectively over the baby's shape. When Robin asked him about the piece, Lynn acknowledged that it was from Madagascar, but he did not explain its origin at the time; it was not clear whether he had the piece in his personal collection (and decided to give it away) or whether it was something that he had collected as an eventual gift for a volunteer. Lynn explained that he wanted Robin to keep the carving as a parting gift.

With Lynn as a missionary mentor, Robin occupied the shape of the small baby in the wooden sculpture, whose scale was exaggerated in miniature form in relation to the large size of the hand. At the same time, Lynn reiterated through his story, citing the reported speech of the "wise woman," that every Christian – no matter what age – occupied the position of the babe in relation to God's outstretched hand. The visual shape implied that no matter where one travels, one's faith and relationship to God is the single most important invisible protection and guide. Through Lynn's verbal discussion of it, the outstretched wooden hand served as a reminder of the "safety" provided by God. For the volunteers in the room, it extended the reassurance that, despite Robin's far travels and physical separation, she would be cared for and watched by God, ultimately connecting them to her through prayer. In a prayer later that evening, Lynn asked God to help Robin's family see that she was protected and to help allay their fears for her travels by providing a "reassuring sense of calm" in their faith in God.

It was especially appropriate that the visual analogy of faith presented to us at the time employed the shapes of the human body. The hand is a long-standing symbol of divine presence, as I indicated in Chapter 6. It holds special relevance, however, to the volunteers working in the Malagasy Partnership warehouse, who construct the patient body in its absence through medical materials that implicate its contours and condition. These supplies further build the body of the church, imagined through the disparate bodies of medical patients. The spiritual labor of Malagasy Partnership in part relies upon piecing together clues and evidence of divine presence across geographic distance, much as one imagines the body through materials that suggest its absence. Lynn's narratives indicate that one must interpret events for clues of God's hand and particularly its physical tactility – lifting, protecting, and transporting materials and persons across the world and "touching" the hearts of many for the cause of the organization. Lynn promised Robin that we would pray for her on the following week as she began her journey, and he asked her several times to tell exactly where she would be flying, whether she would have a layover for each leg of the trip and of what length, and how she would travel from Delhi to her final destination. Robin said that she would e-mail Lynn this information, and Lynn incorporated it into the next week's group prayer.

This vignette underscores one of the main findings of my research with the non-profit organizations: evangelical Lutherans understand their faith not only through rhetorical strategies and language, as Harding (2000) has argued of Southern Baptists in Virginia, but through an interwoven and selectively organized series of material-semiotic forms (Coleman 2006). My primary aim in relaying this vignette, however, is to highlight the two primary senses of exchange that I introduced earlier, since they form crucial

aspects of religious practice in Malagasy Partnership. First, Lynn eloquently used the small-scale wooden carving in an allegorical lesson about the importance of unwavering faith in God's presence. His lesson employed the material form as a didactic and poetic tool**,** in combination with his spoken explanation, the medical supplies in the adjacent warehouse, and the volunteers' bodies. Lynn's lesson supports the wider hermeneutic process in the warehouse of looking for signs of divine presence, but it also relies upon more fine-grained and historically contingent notions of how persons relate to things. Secondly, the celebration for Robin in the warehouse brings forth the importance among the volunteers of gift-giving and exchange at several levels. Through Robin's departure, each volunteer worker participated in the process of self-realization that Robin's mission trip came to represent in the NGO's office. In bestowing the small carving, Lynn gave Robin a token of his faith, his mission work in Madagascar, and his former self: he opened her eyes to the unseen world of his faith. Through blessing and sending Robin forth into the world, the Malagasy Partnership volunteers participated in her spiritual journey. By circulating "called" persons and things into the wider Christian social world, Malagasy Partnership becomes an active and collective participant in "God's kingdom work," as Lynn described it in prayer that evening.

Personhood, Exchange, and the Anthropology of Christianity

In the remaining pages, I would like to argue for a more integrated approach to personhood and exchange in studies of Christianity. My somewhat eclectic approach to these issues within the dissertation draws primarily from two separate but related literatures in anthropology: 1) the study of semiotic ideologies and semeiosis in religious

practice, particularly in Protestantism, and 2) personhood and exchange in economic anthropology and kinship studies. Bringing together these two literatures has been a response to the current situation of missionaries and their families in Minnesota that I found in my research: missionaries took portable things, or movables, with them from Madagascar (such as silver bracelets and Ralambo paintings), and the NGOs they established in Minnesota now send medical supplies to Madagascar. These movables constitute crucial ontological forms (bandages), person-like things (bandages, manufactured medical supplies, and silver bracelets), and circulating extensions or parts of missionaries' social personhood (the keepsakes in home displays, silver bracelets). They have come to be seen by missionaries and their supporters in Minnesota as imbuing or evoking certain qualities and signs of Christian disposition and personhood (e.g., the gospel of salvation and the hand-made bandages), a semiotic process that is neither given nor secure.

In making the latter point, I draw upon the growing literature in anthropology on semiotic ideologies and Peircean semiotics. As I discussed in the Introduction, semiotic ideologies involve "basic assumptions about what kinds of beings inhabit the world, what counts as a possible agent, and thus what are the preconditions for and consequences of moral action" (Keane 2007:20-21). While semiotic ideologies must be considered perpetually unfulfilled propositions, they do shape influential moral prescriptions in Protestantism that attempt to dictate how ordinary practitioners should and should not relate to material things, as well as other sensuous forms (2007:20). Matthew Engelke (2007) has shown that Friday apostolics in Zimbabwe reject the Bible as a book because they emphasize the importance of a "live and direct" relationship with God. He writes,

"The rejection of the Bible is an indication of the apostolics' concern with material things – about what they can and cannot do. Books, in their view, cannot provide for a personal relationship with God, and they often serve to stand in the way" (2007:229).

Engelke argues that the "problem of presence" in Christian practice, a foundational paradox that stems from Christ's earthly presence and subsequent absence, is ultimately a "problem of representation – of how words, objects, and actions get defined and, in the process, become significant" (2007:252). By examining the apostolics' debates concerning the Bible as a material thing, he shows how Friday apostolics position themselves as devout moral actors who do not rely on material or textual mediums to access the divine. The Bible, though, does not become a thing devoid of significance for apostolics. Engelke relays one striking story of a Masowe prophet who challenged his followers to use old and worn Bibles as toilet paper. The prophet used this image in his sermon to make the point that apostolics must have an immediate relationship with God, rather than one gained through reading a text. The prophet was emphasizing the "insignificant" material qualities of the Bible as a book, not a sacred text: its paper pages, worn over time, falling out of their binding, and losing their original shape (2007:2-3, 181).

My point in describing the findings of Engelke's study is to highlight the historical and social contingency in Christian practice of certain assumptions about how words, things, and other semiotic forms should be in proper relationship with one another. Engelke's research indicates how material things are recognized socially as imbuing certain moral qualities over others. Val Daniel has vividly described this process as part of the "multimodality" and dynamism of semiosis: "A sign runs in a bundle of

cables, so to speak, not in single strands" (Daniel 1984:39). I refer to semiosis as an "exchange practice" not to suggest that it involves encapsulated communications back-and-forth between discrete persons, but rather to highlight the notion that sign-relations underpin social communication: they are historically contingent, open-ended, and continually unfolding. These practices form the often assumed or implicit groundwork for wider practices of exchange and native theories of personhood.

The second sense of exchange that I wish to highlight in these concluding comments has been analyzed in a large literature in anthropology (Mauss 1950[1990]; Strathern 1988; Carrier 1995). My focus on the relationship of exchange and personhood in Christian practice emerged from my fieldwork experiences and things that I gradually noticed over time. Lutherans in Malagasy Partnership and IHM, for example, describe their labor and sent medical supplies as "gifts." This language signals the more widespread importance of gift-giving as a theory of exchange, self-expansion, and self-actualization in Christian practice (Coleman 2006, 2004). Citing Parry (1986), Coleman notes,

> All major world religions stress the merits of gifts and alms, ideally given in secrecy and without expectation of worldly return. Unreciprocated gifts become seen as the means to a liberation from bondage to the world, a denial of the profane self, atonement from sin, and a means to salvation (2006:181).

Though medical supplies and monetary donations might seem to be "signs of alienation and individualism" and therefore opposed to the formation of moral community (Coleman 2006:179), Lutherans in my research did not see these things as impersonal or oppositional to their social relationships with Lutherans elsewhere. By viewing them as "gifts," they suggested instead that they shared a deep and enduring social relationship

with these things, their imagined recipients, and the divine; they also enacted and performed their Christian personhood through gift-giving in the presence of more immediate coworkers in suburban Minneapolis. The analysis of exchange practices thus remains in keeping with the issues of importance to ordinary believers in my research: the giving of gifts from God, the request and receipt of divine blessing, and the effort to secure the recognition of their blessings for others. The practice of faith, the latter being the ultimate gift from God for Lutherans, involves extending and defining oneself in relation to the moral landscape of Christian giving.

At the same time, as I hope to have shown through my research with the non-profit organizations, the medical supplies are never only gifts in the spiritual sense but also commodities that participate in a wider global economy. It is important to keep in view the sociopolitical implications of NGO exchange practices. Erica Bornstein (2006:106) argues that the U.S.-based NGO World Vision, which operates a field office in Harare, Zimbabwe, largely identifies its work in the country as politically neutral or "apolitical" due to its role in the civil sector rather than in the government. She suggests that many World Vision employees adopt the agency's "official" discourse and indicate that the NGO "transcend[s] politics via the moral order of the 'Kingdom of God'" (107). Bornstein's points are especially relevant to the Lutherans with whom I did research: the dissolution of the foreign mission movement has created a situation in which American Lutherans form social relationships with Malagasy Lutherans primarily through medical relief and the work of non-governmental organizations.

In closing, however, I wish to disagree with the implication in Bornstein's account that the religious discourse on the "moral order of the 'Kingdom of God'"

necessarily precludes consideration of market forces and other political concerns. At Malagasy Partnership, Lynn made global economic inequalities a part of the exchange practices of the organization and drew moral force from his economic lessons, which made a kind of divine redirection of commodities to Madagascar necessary and significant. Malagasy Partnership, and the agency's volunteers, both support and challenge the business of biomedicine, existing in a complex and oftentimes ambivalent relationship with late capitalism. But as Colleen McDannell argues (1995: 6): "If we immediately assume that whenever money is exchanged religion is debased, then we will miss the subtle ways that people create and maintain spiritual ideals *through* the exchange of goods and the construction of spaces." My research with Lutheran believers in the Midwest U.S. supports this point and marks one preliminary contribution to the wider comparative conversations on these issues in the anthropology of Christianity.

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Before their retirement, American Lutheran missionaries met for the mission's annual fellowship and business meeting on a peninsula called *Libanona* (Lebanon) in southeast Madagascar near Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro. Entire families who were normally scattered across the island attended the conference and stayed for 10 days on the peninsula, swam, played volleyball (even under generator lights at night), cooked communal meals, and held Bible study, devotions, and an English language worship service with Holy Communion. Missionary families gathered in a small assemblage of vacation houses under the peninsula's thick canopy of pine trees. The ALC/ELCA, which purchased the property from the French colonial government just prior to World War I,

turned over ownership of the land to the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM) in the 1980s. Non-governmental organizations, primarily environmental conservation groups, now rent the vacation houses and use them for offices and lodging. The site is known today as the *Centre Ecologique de Libanona* (Libanona Ecology Center).

As I began writing my dissertation, the FLM leadership demonstrated some interest in selling or renting the property to the multi-national mining company Rio Tinto/QMM, which is establishing a large and controversial titanium-sands mine in Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro. Many former American Lutheran missionaries and their family members discussed over e-mail whether or not they should become involved with trying to "preserve" the Libanona site or, in the least, express to the FLM leadership that they opposed the property's sale. My friend Lynn, a former medical missionary, responded to the questions I posed over e-mail about the current situation with this statement: "Characteristic of a lot of issues in Madagascar, Libanona is a mixture of politics, emotions, sentimentality, nostalgia, colonialism, ecology, real or assumed ownership, etc., etc. It is very rarely what it seems to be at the surface." I only hope that within the dissertation I have achieved some of the subtlety and insight that Lynn conveys to me in these lines.

APPENDIX I: QUEEN RANAVALONA I'S 1835 EDICT TO MISSIONARIES

Queen Ranavalona I issued the following edict on February 26, 1835. The translation is from *Madagascar et le Christianisme* (Hübsch 1993).

To the English or French strangers: I thank you for the good that you have done in my land and my kingdom, where you have made known European wisdom and knowledge. Do not worry yourselves – I will not change the customs and rites of our ancestors. Nevertheless, whoever breaks the laws of my kingdom will be put to death – whoever he may be. I welcome all wisdom and knowledge which are good for this country. It would be a waste [of] time and effort to grab the customs and rites of my ancestors. Concerning religious practice – baptism or assemblies – it is forbidden for my people who inhabit this land to take part whether on Sunday or during the week. Concerning you, strangers, you can practice according to your manners and customs. Nevertheless, if skilled handwork and other practical skills exist, which can profit our people, exercise these skills that good will come. These are my instructions which I make known to you. Ranavalomanjaka.

Prohibition for the inhabitants, not to celebrate a cult of ancestors for the forefathers of the strangers: […] I do not forbid you to pray, but your customs are not those of our forefathers; you change our customs. […] I will not allow this to happen in my lands and in my kingdom. So says Ranavalomanjaka.

Concerning baptism, assemblies, prayers outside of school … how many lords rule in this land? […] (Hübsch 1993: 226 cited in Koschorke, Ludwig, and Delgado 2007: 199).

APPENDIX II: AMERICAN LUTHERAN MISSIONARIES, SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM (PARENTAL OCCUPATION)*

Parental Occupation[110]	Number of Missionary Informants	Percentage of Missionary Informants	Women	Men
Farmer	9	45 %	3	6
Missionary Pastor (in Madagascar)	5	25 %	2	3
Day Laborer (Lumberer, Crane Operator, Locker Plant Owner-Operator)	3	15 %	2	1
Ordained Lutheran Pastor	2	10 %	2	0
Missionary Teacher (in Madagascar)	1	5 %	0	1
TOTAL	20		9	11

*For the purposes of this table, the sub-sample excludes missionary children and family members in my research who did not become missionaries, as well as Lutheran supporters, congregants, and aid workers in the Midwest.

[110] I have called this "parental occupation," although these vocations were pursued primarily by the missionaries' fathers. I use this term in the table to avoid suggesting that missionaries' mothers were not active laborers in the same occupation or at the same time as their husbands, even though they were not regarded as officially paid employees, missionaries, or wage earners.

APPENDIX III: TECH QUALITY STANDARDS FOR SUPPLIERS OF MEDICAL AND DENTAL EQUIPMENT

1) Clinically and Economically Appropriate: The supplier will provide equipment that:
    a. Achieves the needed clinical function.
    b. Operates in the appropriate environment and is realistically maintained.
    c. Is economically reasonable.
2) Equipment Quality: The supplier will ensure that equipment is fully operational with all essential accessories and supplies before shipping to the recipient. The supplier should follow a basic checklist to see that all components have been included and will provide the recipient with a like list.
3) Technical Manuals: The supplier will provide appropriate Operator, Service and Maintenance manuals for all equipment.
4) Installation Instructions: The supplier will ensure that detailed installation instructions are provided with all equipment that requires installation.
5) Technical Assistance in Installation: The supplier, where necessary and possible, will provide technical assistance for the installation of equipment.
6) Equipment Training: The supplier, where possible, will promote, recommend, and provide technical assistance for the operation of equipment.
7) Packing and Shipping: The supplier will ensure that equipment is packed to minimize damage during shipment and with all components clearly identified.
8) Desired Equipment Features: In considering providing equipment, suppliers will refer to the following list of characteristics: simplicity, portability, minimum required accessories, and availability of supplies necessary for operation. Standardization of equipment in the user's area is ideal if possible.
9) Supplier-Recipient Agreement: Communication between the supplier and the end user shall determine the appropriateness of the equipment before it is shipped.

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LSL – Luther Theological Seminary Library Collection, St. Paul, Minnesota
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* This book title (and publishing information) has been changed to protect the privacy of people involved in the research.